

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

EXPLORING ISSUES OF RACISM
WITH WHITE STUDENTS
THROUGH A LITERATURE-BASED COURSE

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Doctor of Philosophy

EXPLORING ISSUES OF RACISM WITH WHITE STUDENTS
THROUGH A LITERATURE-BASED COURSE

by Beverley Naidoo

The purpose of this study was to explore issues of racism with a class of white thirteen/fourteen year-olds through a year's course centred primarily around literature. How would their perceptions and frames of reference shape their responses and to what extent might the texts, which strongly indicted racism, encourage shifts in perspective? Drama, videos providing social context, as well as sessions with visitors, particularly black artists, were important elements. A survey to reveal racist perceptions was administered before and after the project to the whole year group.

Apart from notes taken in class as a participant observer, my data was drawn from students' reading journals, responses to specific passages or items, transcripts of class and small group discussions, and interviews. While in initial conception my intended focus was to have been largely on the interaction between students and texts and their responses to other inputs, my lens rapidly widened to encompass the context of the classroom created by the English teacher. The result was to throw up sharply certain fundamental pedagogical issues for anti-racist teaching.

Although the study was ethnographic and most of the data qualitative, part of the survey of racist perceptions was open to quantitative analysis. Both sets of data suggested the possibility of gender differences in responding to issues of racism. While there was evidence of students opening out to new perceptions, the study details some of the considerable difficulties of developing understanding of, and challenging, racism in a predominantly white context where re-perception is not matched or reinforced by change in social structure.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

'Race' and racism in Britain

Black¹ people have lived in Britain since at least Roman times, black soldiers being part of the army of occupation during the first 400 years A.D. (Alexander and Dewjee, 1981; Fryer, 1984: 1-2). We have visual evidence of a black trumpeter at the royal Westminster Tournament in 1511 (Greater London Council, 1986: 7) and the written record of five Africans being brought from the Guinea Coast by the merchant John Lok in 1555 (Banton, 1955: 21-2), to be trained as merchants' assistants and interpreters. The burgeoning slave trade of the 16th and 17th centuries saw the arrival of increasing numbers of black people into the country. An insight into the official response can be gleaned from a statement by Elizabeth I's Privy Council, when ordering the deportation on July 11 1596 of ten black people brought from Spain by Sir Thomas Baskerville (Acts of the Privy Council, XXVI, 1596-7; Walvin, 1973: 8):

"...there are of late divers blackamoors brought into this realme, of which kinde of people there are already here to manie, considering howe God hath blessed this land with great increase of people of our owne nation as anie countree in the world, whereof manie for want of service and meanes to sett them on work fall to idleness and to great extremytie. her Majesty's pleasure therefore ys that those kinde of people should be sent forth of the lande..."

This statement, almost 400 years old, provides us with linguistic evidence of deep-seated perceptions based on a notion of different 'races' which has endured amongst white communities in Britain to this day, bolstering racist attitudes, practices and structures. 'Race' itself, as it is

¹ My use of the term 'black' is in the broad political sense of those people not regarded as 'white'. I have not used the capitalised form for either term on the grounds that language is not merely an attempt to reflect reality but perpetuates selective constructions of reality. While fully acknowledging that racism affects how black and white people experience society, I feel that capitalisation might be taken to suggest not just a political reality but an objective biological reality.

popularly conceived, has no objective biological validity (Hiernaux et al, 1965; Rose et al, 1978; Lewontin, 1987), but is a social construction (Figueroa, 1984). Nevertheless locked away in this social construct, as passed on through successive generations is "the assumption that underlying the social label is a biological basis, that there are biologically distinguishing features which separate one 'race' from another." (Rose et al: 5) Perhaps the most telling phrase of Elizabeth's edict is "of which kinde of people" in referring to black people. Blacks were perceived as of a different 'kind', clearly distinguishable from "people of our owne nation". Shakespeare's Caliban was a reflection of such common Elizabethan conceptions of the savage that "wouldst gabble like/ A thing most brutish", perpetuator of a "vile race" (The Tempest, I.ii). Elizabethan sexual fears are furthermore revealed in Caliban's attempt to rape Miranda, thwarted only just in time by her father Prospero, Caliban's self-appointed coloniser:

Caliban: O ho! O ho! - 'would it had been done!
Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else
This isle with Calibans. (I.ii)

Given this way of framing human beings into different kinds from 'our own' - who ultimately present what could be conceived as a biological threat to the nation - it is not difficult to see how problems of unemployment and related ills can also be simplistically framed in terms of there being too many people, with those of a different kind belonging elsewhere. Thus black people become further victimised in being represented as the cause of the problem, with attention being deflected from challenging questions about how the society is structured and how it shares out economic wealth, political power and social status.

Echoes of the concepts, language and agenda of Elizabeth I's Privy Council could be heard reverberating over 380 years later in pronouncements of politicians like Enoch Powell (in Gilroy, 1987: 43) and Margaret Thatcher (1978):

"The nation has been and is still being, eroded and hollowed out from within by implantation of unassimilated and unassimilable populations... alien wedges in the heartland of the state." (Powell, 9.4.76)

"People are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture and you know the British character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so much throughout the world, that if there is any fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in." (Thatcher, 30.1.1978)

Inherent in Powell's concept of the nation and Thatcher's "this country" with its "British character" is the notion of a white British 'race', although there is a subtle shift from the language of overt 'racial' superiority to that of cultural difference. The Immigration Act of 1968 with its legal concept of patriality - enabling anyone with a UK-born grandparent to claim nationality - embedded into British statute law what Gilroy (1987: 45) refers to as the "cultural biology of 'race'". The converse to the proverbial 'Once an Englishman, always an Englishman' was put bluntly at the time by Powell (in Gilroy, 1987: 46): "the West Indian does not by being born in England, become an Englishman. In law, he becomes a United Kingdom citizen by birth; in fact he is a West Indian or an Asian still." Thirteen years later that law was changed. Patriality, as opposed to birth, became established as the criterion for future British citizenship in the British Nationality Act 1981, thereby ensuring predominantly white entitlement to this status (Davey, 1983: 32). Solomos (1989: 22) notes how Gilroy and others (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Race and Politics Group, 1982) have pointed to the emergence of 'the new racism', defined by the ways in which notions of culture and nation are being used to construct a definition of exclusive 'Britishness' in which differences in culture, ethnicity or 'race' are outside the Anglocentric norm. As Gilroy (1987: 45) perceives it:

"The new racism is primarily concerned with mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. It specifies who may legitimately belong to the national community and simultaneously advances reasons for the segregation or banishment of those whose 'origin, sentiment or citizenship' assigns them elsewhere... The process of

national decline is presented as coinciding with the dilution of once homogeneous and continuous national stock by alien strains."

With black immigration and citizenship tightly controlled through legislation and with the success of 'Powellism' - described by Hall (1978: 29-30) as "the formation of an 'official' racist policy at the heart of British political culture" - discussion about 'race' from the right refocused from 'the enemy without' to 'the enemy within' which was alleged to be threatening the nation's cultural and political values (Solomos, 1989: 135). To Powell, various forces of "the invisible enemy within" (in Hall, 1978: 30) were conspiring to destroy British society's cohesion, its social order. This shift of focus was reflected in the growth in imagery associating black people with inner-city unrest, decay and disorder, contrasting sharply with the low key Government and media response to documented increases in racist attacks (Daniel, 1968; Humphry and John, 1971; Smith, 1977; Brown, 1984; Commission for Racial Equality, 1987; CRE 1988). An underlying assumption frequently present in official presentation of such attacks has been that racism is not the issue, but that what is being manifested can be seen rather as a 'natural' response to cultural and racial difference (Solomos, 1989: 135).

It is, of course, not only black people who have been targets of racism within British society. The history of both Irish and Jewish immigration provides "continuities and discontinuities between contemporary racial ideologies and previous forms" (Solomos, 1989: 27). While the state has not intervened in controlling Irish migration as it has for Jewish and black people, there is a long history of anti-Irish stereotyping, relating not only to the position of Irish migrants on mainland Britain, but to England's dominant political and economic relationship with Ireland (Curtis, 1984). Drawing strong parallels between the oppression and exploitation of black people and that of the Irish, Curtis

documents the growth of stereotyping and the notion of Irish inferiority from Norman times as conveyed in writings, cartoons, popular jokes and sayings, as well as in Victorian theories of 'scientific' racism in which the Celtic 'race' was categorised amongst the lower 'breeds' of the assumed hierarchy. Cohen (1988) has also focused on the historical antecedents of anti-black racism, including an examination of anti-semitism and development of the concept of the monstrous 'other'.

Apart from construction of racist thinking by commission, racist ideology is consolidated through omission. For instance, the major determinants of the presence of black people are conveniently omitted. Enoch Powell is not known for reminding supporters of deportation that formerly, as Minister of Health in the mid 1950s, he had been actively involved in post-war campaigns to recruit labour, from the Caribbean in particular. Nor, I suspect, did Elizabeth's Privy Council remind its audience that most "blackamoors" were in England as a direct consequence of English involvement in slavery. It was John Hawkins who, in 1562, went in search of slaves to Africa - not the other way round (Davidson, 1961: 64-5; Fryer, 1984: 8). Questions of responsibility towards fellow human beings do not appear to arise when the abused are regarded as being outside the social circle. To Hall (1978: 25) the matter of omission is critical:

"...the development of an indigenous British racism in the post-war period begins with the profound historical forgetfulness - what I want to call the loss of historical memory, a kind of historical amnesia, a decisive mental repression - which has overtaken the British people about race and Empire since the 1950s. Paradoxically, it seems to me, the native, home-grown variety of racism begins with this attempt to wipe out and efface every trace of the colonial and imperial past. Clearly that is one effect of the traumatic adjustment to the very process of bringing Empire to an end. But undoubtedly, it has left an enormous reservoir of guilt and a deep, historical, resentment."

Hall's point is brought home forcefully when considering the pre-war confidence and assurance with which Winston Churchill

(in Horrox and McCredie, 1979) openly acknowledged the material value of the colonies in funding Britain's Industrial Revolution:

"Our possessions of the West Indies, like that of India... gave us... the strength, the support, but specially the capital, the wealth, at a time when no other European nation possessed such a reserve, which enabled us... to lay the foundation of that commercial and financial leadership which... enabled us to make our great position in the world."

It seems inconceivable that this kind of admission by the British Government would ever be publicly made today, when the popular image of Britain's relationship with the 'Third World' appears to be that of munificent donor to 'should-be-grateful' recipients, dependent on 'aid' from the West and whose inhabitants need to be kept at bay through strict immigration controls.

According to Mullan (1980: 11-12), centuries of British exploitation have led to a range of "justificatory beliefs" becoming institutionalised in the minds of whites so that racism is "almost second nature... a part of everyday life, daily stated and largely unquestioned":

"Black or white, no peoples can be torn away from their history, the historical and social context in which they define themselves or seek meaning for their existence. That racism had been an integral part of the British experience for more than four centuries and that it had become a part of popular culture - in the language, literature, music etc. - all helped to determine the white British response to black migration."

Just as none of us can be extracted from our history, racism is also "historically specific" (Hall, 1978: 26). While today's racism shares features in common with similar phenomena at other times, and in other places, it is nevertheless shaped by the present. Whereas pre-war racism was that of Empire and colonialism, the post-war period saw racism become, as Hall puts it "a racism 'at home', not abroad" - with reconstruction of the enemy from without, to within."

Racism, as described above, is highly complex. While it is a universal phenomenon and not unique to Britain, it has strong

historical roots in this country, maintaining common elements - or an 'echo' - over time. However it is also historically specific to each period, its 'shape' adapting to new conditions. In its structural form it is deeply embedded at an institutional level within economic, political and social structures, policies and practices. In its ideological form it is deeply embedded within popular culture, as indicated by Mullard, and within the society's "frames of reference" (Figueroa, 1984). Shared by the majority of Britons and closely associated with British identity, these frames of reference are the "largely unacknowledged and unverballed substratum of beliefs, assumptions, feelings, quasi-memories, etc. which underlie, sustain and inform perception, thought and action" (Figueroa and Swart, 1985). For instance, describing the crisis of the 1970s economic recession, Hall (1978: 31) writes: "This is not a crisis of race. But race punctuates the crisis. Race is the lens through which people come to perceive that a crisis is developing. It is the framework through which the crisis is experienced." At its core, racism is based on the socially-constructed belief in the existence of different 'races' to which it is deemed possible to ascribe inherent characteristics. It is thus, according to Carter and Williams, "more than the sum of individual prejudice: it becomes an organising principle of popular consciousness" (1987:177). Carter and Williams also provide a sharp critique of the prevalent definition of racism in terms of "power + prejudice" in terms of which it is argued that all white people in Britain have power over black people and only white people can be racist:

"In short, the racism = power + prejudice formula rests on a personalized view of power and an understanding of racism which sets it aside from economic relations. White power and white attitudes within particular institutions become the focus of policies. The political implications of this are far reaching." (Carter and Williams, 1987: 174)

In other words, whiteness or biological skin colour becomes the pre-eminent critical factor for any social analysis concerning black/white relationships, irrespective even of

class. My own working definition, however, of racism is of a highly complex phenomenon of discrimination and oppression, which, although universal, is nevertheless historically specific in both its structural and ideological forms in each society, and which is based on a socially-constructed belief in the existence of inherently different 'races'.

I have not yet referred to the crucial aspect of reaction and resistance to racism. Since the publication of Because They're Black by Humphry and John (1971) and Mullan's Black Britain (1973) there has been a gradual growth in the literature detailing the increasingly active, angry and organised black response (Moore, 1975; Fryer, 1984; Sivanandan, 1982; Sivanandan, 1986). Discussions about anti-discrimination legislation were initiated by the Labour Party in the late 1950s in the context of the early intense debates about immigration (Lester and Bindman, 1972; Bindman, 1980) and led to the first Race Relations Act of 1965 which prohibited discrimination in public places, but left the crucial areas of housing and employment untouched. While the remit of subsequent Race Relations Acts of 1968 and 1976 was widened, the fundamental duality in establishing anti-discrimination legislation and equal opportunity policies at the same time as instituting and refining discriminatory immigration laws, has been viewed not only as reducing the effectiveness of anti-discrimination measures (Davey, 1983: 34) but as "a thoroughly contradictory process based as much on political expediency as on any commitment to justice and equality" (Solomos, 1989: 68). Nevertheless the existence of Race Relations legislation indicates that the state is not monolithic and suggests the possibility of certain ideological contradictions which could be of use in attempts to undermine racist frames of reference.

Schools and cultural transmission

Schools play a crucial role in the business of cultural transmission and the transmission of social patterns (Lawton, 1973; Bowles, 1976; Bourdieu, 1976). According to Young,

education is "a selection and organization from the available knowledge at a particular time which involves conscious or unconscious choices" (1971: 24) and "those in positions of power will attempt to define what is to be taken as knowledge" (1971: 32). Since 1870 the majority of children have been educated in state schools and there have always been limits to which a state school can openly deviate from the state's expectations, even prior to the centralised control of the 1988 Education Reform Act. Media coverage and popular outcries surrounding London schools like Rivington (Berg, 1968) and William Tyndale (Gretton and Jackson, 1976; Ellis, McWhirter, McColgan and Haddow, 1976) reveal how susceptible schools have been to attack when it has been suspected that unacceptable values are being transmitted to the children, although the ostensible focus of the attack may be on features of management. The Conservative Government's enforced break-up of the Inner London Education Authority itself reveals the same phenomenon on a grander scale. Even though the vast majority of schools and teachers have not put themselves out of line in the past, room for diversity is nevertheless being further clamped down by "increasing centralised control over the delivery and trajectory of education" (Troyna, 1988: 5). Troyna quotes Hartnett and Naish on the effects:

"Centralization has restricted the autonomy of local education authorities in dealing with their local education problems; has removed much control over the curriculum from teachers; and has reached deep into the curriculum of teacher education. The effect of this has been to make the technical and administrative issues about education (such as how to get better value for money or how to relate schools more closely with industry) appear to be the central ones." (Hartnett, A. and Naish, M. 1986)

One might well see centralisation as, in part, the government's response to the reformulation of certain values and priorities in a number of local authorities where black people have been in sufficient numbers to make their voices heard and begin to have a say in education. Just one of the many areas of concern for black and ethnic minority parents

has been how the reality of their varied histories and cultures is represented in their children's schools. As Tomlinson (1990: 71) has noted, Britain still has largely retained "the imperial curriculum":

"The recognition that the curriculum was, and still is, in many ways influenced by the beliefs and values of a period of imperial enthusiasm and a final expansion of the British Empire - a period which coincided with the development of mass education - has however been afforded little discussion. Yet it was during this period of Empire that many aspects of what is now regarded as 'British culture' came to be reflected in the school curriculum, underpinned by a set of values still regarded by many as 'traditional' British values."

Books for children supply ample evidence of past involvement of schools in propagating "justificatory beliefs" and values. For instance, during the colonial era black people were represented in children's fiction in three pre-eminent ways - as primitive savage, faithful servant or the comic butt of fun (Naidoo, 1988). Many schools still openly retain such books on shelves, without offering any programme of critical intervention. Not only fiction but textbooks and non-fiction 'information' books from colonial times typically portray black people in terms of racist stereotypes, promoting notions such as primitiveness and inferiority in contrast to supposed white civilisation and superiority (Zimet, 1976; Dixon, 1977; Hicks, 1980a, 1980b; Preiswerk, 1981; Gill, 1982; Kent, 1982; Naidoo, 1985a; Klein, 1985). The Irish have come in for similar treatment (Curtis, 1985). Stereotyping, marginalisation and omission of black people are evident in most reading schemes (Rice, 1987). While critical studies of bias in examination syllabuses in the early 1980s (Little and Willey, 1981; Schools Council, 1981; Figueroa and Vida, 1984) were followed by some changes, the pattern has been piecemeal. For instance the 1988 English Literature GCSE syllabus for the Southern Examining Group offered only 4 out of 121 books by black writers, little over 3 per cent, compared with 13 out of 96, or 13.5 per cent for the London and East Anglian Group (Naidoo, 1988). It appeared that a form of 'cultural

apartheid' was at work with more black writers being offered only where there were more black students.

According to Verma (1990) the essentially "monocultural and assimilationist orientation" of the British education system is set to be further entrenched by the state's move to a centralised and overtly controlled National Curriculum, the content of which is "biased in favour of white middle-class Anglo-Saxon pupils". In addition, the Education Reform Act is set to create further divisions between schools, particularly between those that 'have' and those that 'have not' and to further reinforce black disadvantage, inequality and injustice (Verma, 1990; Richardson, 1988, 1989; Hatcher, 1989). Whatever the smattering of useful statements within individual National Curriculum documents in terms of reflecting Britain as a diverse society, it seems unlikely that they could carry the necessary force to undo the over-arching discriminatory effects of the Education Reform Act (Ball and Troyna, 1989) and the fundamental nationalism within the National Curriculum content itself. While some commentators such as Eggleston (1990) perceive "some hope for a genuinely multi-ethnic perspective" in a few of the Working Group reports (Mathematics, Science, English and Technology), there is an acknowledgement that "these concessions to a multi-ethnic dimension are small, and in the context of the whole reports marginal" (1990: 10). A clear illustration of contradiction between statement and actual content lies within the History National Curriculum document (DES, 1990), which refers to Britain as a multicultural society (para 11.25) and begins with a positive statement of the purposes of school history (para. 1.7) in terms of helping students understand the present in the context of the past; helping students develop a sense of identity and understanding of their cultural roots; and contributing to their understanding of countries and cultures in the modern world. However of the twenty-nine named individuals mentioned under 'essential information' in the core units, only three are women and all are white Europeans.

Contradictions between the over-all structural changes of the Education Reform Act, alongside the predominantly assimilationist content of the National Curriculum, and some of the proposals for valuing diversity and 'equal opportunities' appear to reflect fundamental contradictions in the wider society to which I have already alluded: in particular the duality between a highly efficient framework of immigration legislation - promoting 'British' equals 'white' - and constrained Race Relations legislation, attempting to counter some of the racist effects of the former.

Another critical perspective is provided by Jones (1990a; 1990b) who focuses on the increasing hegemony of the political right and on the deflection of educational debate away from the fundamental issue of class (1990a):

"...there have developed among influential educationalists over the last 15 years, an interest in deploying many of the 'means' of progressive education, while setting to one side some of its more radical, social and cultural commitments."

Within progressive English teaching this has meant, for instance, promotion of the value of oracy or 'talk' as an element of 'good practice' without reference to the original commitment to empowerment of working class students and social justice which was present amongst many of the early protagonists. Similarly there has been increasing acceptance of diversity in accents and dialects in terms of enriching the linguistic environment of school and classroom rather than in terms of challenging the connections between language and power. Radical critiques in the '60s and early '70s which attempted to address the fundamental connection between class and educational achievement appear to have been absorbed into bland official statements about providing equal opportunities. Furthermore the latter are frequently interpreted as providing the same thing to everyone, without recognition of critical differences in starting points. Jones (1990a) cites the English Working Party's reference in its chapter on 'Equal Opportunities' to the fact that "one of the best demonstrated findings of educational research" (DES, 1989: 11.10) concerns

the association between social background and educational attainment. However the report does not address the issue any further except to say that "The causes of such differences are not well understood. But curricular and assessment arrangements should aim to raise expectations and to help to narrow the gap wherever possible". A medical analogy for this advice might be that, having demonstrated a strong association between cancer and death, the recommended treatment for cancer patients is for them to be kept as comfortable as possible.

Racism and education

Given the entrenched class nature of education, it was inevitable that the vast majority of children of post-war immigrants, coming to fill Britain's labour shortages, would find themselves in the nation's least academically successful schools. Initial state 'laissez-faire' towards the migrants was shattered by the 1958 anti-black riots in London, popularised by the media as 'race riots'. As Fryer (1984: 378) records: "Stimulated by fascist propaganda urging that black people be driven out of Britain, racist attacks were by 1958 a commonplace of black life in London." The state's response was to introduce the First Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962. The first official educational response came as a delayed reaction three years later (DES, 1965). Its philosophy was that of assimilation of immigrants who presented a 'problem' because they did not speak English. Following Roy Jenkins' call in 1966, as Labour's Home Secretary, for "equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance" (in Rose, E. et al., 1969: 11), the official dominant philosophy in the late '60s to the early '70s shifted to one of integration. The focus was retained on adaptation by immigrant communities but it was argued that white society should become more aware of minority cultures and make allowances for them. British-born black children were still largely regarded as 'immigrants'. The late '70s and early '80s saw the beginning of an official shift in focus onto cultural diversity and pluralism, based on a theoretical

notion of equality of the different cultures in British society. Ideas of an anti-racist philosophy however began to permeate into the policies of some Local Education Authorities in the early '80s, both in response to pressures from black students within schools and political struggles and demands from active local communities outside schools. Some anti-racist educationalists rejected the centrality of 'culture' to a policy for equality and justice, or as Milner succinctly put it (1982: 72): "British society did not consign black people to its bargain basement because of their dress, diet or unfamiliar customs, it did so because of their race".² With an anti-racist orientation, for the first time there was official focus on the actual, and structural, inequalities faced by black people and other ethnic minorities. It began to be argued that the major task was to tackle racism (including structural and institutional racism) if real equality and justice were to be achieved for all pupils, with the Inner London Education Authority becoming the first local authority to produce official policy documents reflecting this perspective (ILEA, 1983).

Various models have been developed around these stages of educational response to the presence of black people in Britain (Mullard, 1984; Troyna and Williams, 1986; Brandt, 1986) although they are by no means historically discrete. The argument of how society's racism was reproduced within the school system was first articulated by Bernard Coard (1971) in his seminal book How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System. Knowledge about racism in society and schools is something with which the black community has always lived. In contrast, particularly in predominantly white communities, Carlton Duncan points out that much assimilationist practice is still

² Powerful evidence of this was provided in the BBC series Black and White (BBC, 1988) when two British reporters - closely matched in terms of occupation, class, speech and dress, but differing in colour - tested their relative access to accommodation, employment and clubs.

current today (1987: 80). Given this entrenchment of racist culture in a society still structured on racist lines (Brown, 1984), the publication of Education for All: the report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups (Swann Report, DES, 1985) provided a significant focus for educational debate. For the first time there was reference in an official document to the importance of countering racism in mainly white areas. However the report was not only attacked by the conservative right but also sharply criticised from within the anti-racist movement. With its essentially multicultural orientation and loose conception of racism as largely the consequence of ignorance and individual prejudice, it was accused of being designed to serve a placatory function within a society where racism remains deeply embedded within institutions and structures (Troyna, 1987). Troyna, for instance, argues that the concept 'Education for All' was the government's response to growing demands for the teaching of community languages and separate schools and that

"...there was a correlative need for the state to construct an ideology to assuage the anxieties of black parents that the education system is failing to respond adequately or appropriately to the needs of their children." (Troyna, 1987: 28)

Or as Brandt (1986: 119) put it in his attempt to define different perspectives in the multicultural/anti-racist debate:

"...the position that seeks to explain the education debate mainly or solely through the discourse of anti-racism would argue that institutionalized multiculturalism is itself a product of institutional racism and a 'racial form' that is itself racist. This is so in that it does not derive directly from Black struggle or the Black experience but rather marks the attempt of racist education to adapt to the challenges posed to it by the transhistorical struggle of Black people in this country against their continued oppression by institutional racism."

While in his theory Brandt polarises the debate, it is far more difficult in practice to separate out the multicultural from the anti-racist elements in the actual examples he

provides of teaching strategies. Furthermore his observations are limited to multi-ethnic classrooms and his argument that anti-racist education must "derive directly from Black struggle or the Black experience" would appear to preclude the possibility of anti-racist work in the majority of schools which are predominantly white. Other educationalists - in a concern for uniting practitioners and potential allies - have attempted to bridge, or reject, the 'gulf' between multicultural and anti-racist education (Grinter, 1985; Leicester, 1986; Figueroa, 1986). For Leicester, the debate implies "a fake dichotomy" since there is both a racist and an anti-racist conception of multicultural education. While the latter is necessary, she acknowledges however that it is nevertheless "insufficient for anti-racist education because anti-racism must address the issue of structural discrimination too" (Leicester, 1986: 7). To Cohen, the debate is "sterile and destructive" and it is necessary to "find ways of combining the positive elements in both approaches while avoiding their negative features" (1987: 4). This perspective is rooted in a cultural studies project on reducing 'common sense' racism by enabling children "to find their voice" (Cohen, 1988/9: 7), while learning to understand their own constructions, including the construction of racist imagery.

Carlton Duncan, one of the four black members of the Swann Committee, has also argued for a concept of education which unites multicultural and anti-racist elements (1987: 83):

"What in fact was necessary, and is necessary, to save present and future generations of black children in the schools is a multicultural approach in an anti-racist sense... Multicultural education which is anti-racist based seeks equitable restructuring of power structures and the just redistribution of the power held."

A crucial factor for Duncan is that as a headteacher and a practitioner operating within the present school system he is faced with developing strategies for change which have to relate to practical realities. Schools operate as institutions in a society controlled by dominant interests. A possible indication of the constraints under which Duncan operates is

his use of the word "seeks" rather than 'demands'. Given embedded racism in society, what is the maximum schools can achieve? Asked about the effectiveness of the multicultural/anti-racist policy at Duncan's own school (George Dixon, Birmingham), a student replied: "It limits racism." (BBC Mosaic, 1989) This is clearly an important achievement. How much a school can extend 'damage limitation' into a genuinely transformative role in the wider society - and effect change in the alignment of power - is what remains open to question.

According to Carrington and Short (1989) while fundamental ideological differences remain between anti-racists and multiculturalists, at the level of educational practice the distinction is often hard to maintain. There are anti-racists who teach about cultural diversity³ and multiculturalists who teach about racism, with both parties increasingly supporting common organisational, curricular and pedagogical strategies for reduction of prejudice and combatting racism within schools. For example, Lynch (1987) locates prejudice reduction as a central concern of multicultural education and along with Banks (1985; 1986; 1989), stresses the importance of a holistic approach and institutional reform to affect the whole school. How such reform is broached is also critical. For instance, a most powerful indictment of the dangers of attempting to impose an anti-racist policy in an authoritarian, non-democratic manner has emerged from the Macdonald Enquiry ('The Burnage Report'), investigating the death of thirteen year old Ahmed Ullah following a racist

³ It is interesting to note how a highly theoretical exponent of anti-racism such as Mullard (1984) has adapted his language in his more recent role as Chair of the Arts Education for a Multicultural Society project. It would appear that his enlistment of "the three 'O's" - Orientation, Observation and Opposition - in the struggle against racism (1984: 42) have now made room for three 'C's in the attempt "to achieve multicultural, non-racist understanding within a framework of cultural diversity, challenge and change" (1989).

attack in a Manchester school playground (Macdonald Enquiry, 1990).

The situation in predominantly white areas

While white institutions and power structures in inner cities and provincial towns with significant black populations have at least been challenged over the past couple of decades to concede some shifts in political power, leading among other things to certain shifts in local education policies, the situation is different in predominantly white areas. Reinforcing his earlier point about Britain's "historical amnesia" about its colonial past, Hall (1985) has described racism in terms of structured omission:

"Racism is as much a structured absence - a not-speaking about things - as it is a positive setting up of attitudes to 'race'."

This "not-speaking about things" is clearly much more obvious in areas where there are hardly any black people, a feature well-documented in Chris Gaine's aptly-titled study No Problem Here (1987) and, as Taylor has pointed out, "the majority of Britain's population... does not live in inner cities, nor is it in regular contact with non-white people" (Taylor, 1984: 1). Although the Swann Report was seen by its critics as a brake in many respects on the kind of radical changes necessary to combat deeply institutionalised racism, in the mainly white shires or schools which have regarded the idea of even multicultural education as totally irrelevant, the report nevertheless provided a wedge in the door. In its detailed critique NAME on Swann, the National Anti-Racist Movement in Education (1985) urged that "Whatever the short-comings of the Swann Report the issues that it raises must be kept on the educational agenda" (NAME, 1985: 1). At a tactical level the report's official status at least 'legitimised' raising issues of racism, perhaps for the first time in many areas. To be wedged in the door was no where near the centre, but it was a step onward from being outside. Following Swann, 'education for a multi-ethnic society' became a national priority with 'white' LEAs being specifically

encouraged to apply for 70 per cent Education Support Grant government funding for local multicultural projects.

Attitudes amongst white students

Despite the ubiquitous 'no problem here' response, there is consistent evidence of racist attitudes amongst young white people. Attempts to measure and understand the significant factors determining racial prejudice have been carried out in Britain since the 1970s (Bagley, 1970a; 1970b; Verma and Macdonald, 1971; Bagley and Verma, 1975; 1979), with research showing at how early an age children develop an awareness of 'race' and the social weight attached to the different classifications (Goodman, 1964; Milner, 1975; 1983; Davey, 1983; Jeffcoate, 1979). Tomlinson suggests that "over 40 years after the Declaration of Human Rights, there has been remarkably little change in the beliefs that white pupils, parents and some teachers hold, about non-white former colonial settlers in Britain, and about former colonies and the Third World" (Tomlinson, 1990: 44). Drawing on evidence collected from essays and discussions during the 1970s and 1980s, Tomlinson notes a number of recurrent negative themes: exclusionism (e.g. Britain is, and should remain, a 'white' country); ethnocentrism ('our' culture is superior); imperial regret ('we' once owned the world); scapegoating (immigrants take 'our' jobs and live in 'luxury'); repatriation (black people and foreigners should be sent back to their 'own' countries); racial strife (the minorities are militant and to blame for confrontations, crime and violence). Tomlinson also notes the emergence of more positive themes despite these often being "grudging, paternalistic and hard for young white people to articulate... also often in conflict with parental views" (Tomlinson, 1990: 46), namely: acceptance (e.g. minorities have been here a long time and are no different in many ways); sympathy (minorities in Britain have problems, as do Third World people); respect (cultural respect for black musicians and sports people); unfairness (name-calling and harassment are unfair - distancing 'us' from 'real' racists).

This range of negative and positive themes reflects the duality in a society which maintains 'race relations' legislation yet which is fundamentally shaped by racist immigration laws with the popular media equation of black people and 'problems' (Hartmann, Husband and Clark, 1974; Murray and Searle, 1989). It is not uncommon to find attitudinal paradox within individual students (Jeffcoate, 1979: 19) or as Gaine puts it, a combination of "good intentions with confused bigotry" (1987: 5). According to Allport "the ethnic attitudes of many individuals lack internal integration... The person himself may be said to be ambivalent - or more accurately, multivalent" (1954: 505). It is this framework of ambivalence or attitudinal paradox that provides potential room for individual shifts in perception and attitude change.

According to British Social Attitudes (1984) the proportion of people willing to describe themselves as racially prejudiced has risen. This is confirmed by a 1986 survey for New Society (Williams, 1986) of attitudes amongst young people, which revealed 42 per cent of white pupils up to 19 years of age acknowledging personal prejudice against other 'races'. While not quantified, a similar impression of widespread racism was obtained by the Swann Committee which commissioned investigations into 26 primary and secondary "all-white" schools drawn from six LEAS, three in the North of England and three in the South (Swann Report, 1985: 232-7; 243-314):

"The project revealed widespread evidence of racism in all the areas covered - ranging from unintentional racism and patronising and stereotyped ideas about ethnic minority groups combined with an appalling ignorance of their cultural backgrounds and life-styles and of the facts of race and immigration, to extremes of overt racial hatred and "National Front"-style attitudes. Asian pupils, usually viewed collectively as "Pakis", seemed to be most frequently the object of animosity, dislike and hatred, apparently because of their greater perceived "strangeness" and "difference" from the accepted cultural, religious and linguistic norms."

A survey of 300 young white people (9 and 13 year olds and sixth formers) in urban Tyneside produced compatible evidence

of overt hostility, racist and stereotypical attitudes, ignorance and misinformation (Mould, 1986). The area is one of higher than average unemployment and an analysis of the pupils' writing on the subject of 'black people' suggested that approximately 75 per cent held negative attitudes, with about a quarter of these being strongly hostile. Positive views tended to be framed within a paternalistic outlook and were frequently confused. As in the Swann study, apart from concern over the evidence itself, Mould commented "what is more disturbing that some headteachers and teachers deny that this situation exists" (1986: 12).

Following the playground murder of Ahmed Ullah, a study commissioned by the Committee of Enquiry revealed "unambiguous and disturbing evidence of the reality of racist behaviour in our schools" (Kelly and Cohn, 1988). Further documentation on the widespread and persistent nature of racial harassment in schools was provided by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE, 1988) which emphasised the point about the 'ordinariness' of those responsible for racist abuse:

"The perpetrators span the age range from infant to adult, and they include pupils, students, teachers, lecturers and parents, all of whom may be described as ordinary, everyday members of the learning community. We need to disabuse our minds of the idea that racial harassment is solely or even mainly the work of the lunatic fringe or outside extremists."

The Stenhouse research into the 'neutral chairman' and other teaching strategies for attitude change

In his seminal article on 'Teaching Race' (1981: 59), Hall has written about

"handling the racist time-bomb and doing so adequately so that we connect with our students' experience and can therefore be sure of defusing it... So we have to consider the problem of how to create an atmosphere in which those questions can be openly and honestly discussed; one in which your own position can emerge without people feeling over-weighted by its authority (although the teacher's authority is always exerted whether you are at the front or the back of the class)."

The question of how teachers use their authority is both political and highly vexed. Without, I believe, sharing Hall's Marxist perspective, Lawrence Stenhouse as director of the first major project in Britain on 'The Problems and Effects of Teaching about Race Relations' (1972-1975) was nevertheless very concerned about the question of creating an open atmosphere for student discussion (Stenhouse, Verma, Wild and Nixon, 1982). The project, involving 39 schools and 1400 fourteen to fifteen year olds including controls (just under half in predominantly white areas), was designed to investigate three teaching methods: Strategy A, with the aim of students developing their understanding through discussion of materials from a 'race pack' under a teacher as 'neutral chairman', whose role was simply to control the proceedings fairly; Strategy B, with the aim of promoting tolerance through discussion of materials from the same pack under a partisan 'didactic' chairman whose role was to argue against prejudice, although not in an authoritarian manner; and Strategy C involving the use of situational improvised drama (with the 'race pack' as supplementary material). The most controversial of these - Strategy A - had originated in the preceding Humanities Curriculum Project (1970) where it was devised as a method whereby a teacher who, while not personally neutral, would introduce controversial materials to students using "procedural neutrality to avoid asserting his [sic] views with the authority of his position behind him" (Stenhouse, 1982: 5). Although the intention was to promote student autonomy and responsibility in reflecting on issues, it was severely criticised by anti-racists as a method which allowed students with strong racist views to express these effectively uncountered, unless there happened to be students present who were prepared to articulate equally strong anti-racist views. Given the extent of racism in the society, this was not so likely, and furthermore the hidden curriculum and 'message' of a neutral chair was that of the individual's entitlement to hold racist views. This latter perspective of individual entitlement has been further argued by Jeffcoate

(1979: 26-40) from a child-centred position, asserting that it is "arrogant and presumptuous... for schools to stipulate as a curriculum target that children should respect other races and cultures. Implicitly it is to treat children as objects who need something doing to them. Children's attitudes and opinions are their own affairs" (1979: 30). While Jeffcoate hoped that his students would develop respect for others from the example he set, he characterised the position concerned with affective, as opposed to purely cognitive, objectives in education as 'indoctrination'. Stradling (in Stradling et al, 1984: 10-11) however, usefully differentiates between indoctrination and teachers being open about their value judgements (i.e. not disguising them as facts). He also points to schools' legitimation of policies on racism and sexism in terms of national legislation against 'race' and sex discrimination.

Not all proponents of the neutral chair have adopted Jeffcoate's somewhat confused position. The Inner London Education Authority Inspectors proposed it as a mechanism for dealing with 'controversial issues' (ILEA, 1986) although qualified its appropriateness to situations in which "there is a spread of knowledge and opinion within the class and... evidence of a willingness to be tolerant and to respect evidence" (1986: 11) However the Inspectors also acknowledged that there were times when a teacher needed to be more directly involved, a view echoing that of Stradling, Noctor and Baines (1984) who advocate a strategically flexible, eclectic approach that takes into account the students' knowledge, values and experience; the school and classroom climate; and the age, ability and responses of the students. The notion of even possible neutrality for a teacher is, however, fiercely rejected by Searle writing of the falsity of pretending that he was not engaged in the same working class struggles as those of his pupils (1975). Pupils and teachers need to develop "a comradeship of the classroom" (Searle, 1977: 13) which needs to be a site of open debate and creative

activity aimed at exposing and countering "the facile and inhuman ideas that organised racism has pushed into currency" (1977: 11). Singh (1988) argues - and it is a perspective which I would endorse - that while recognising the importance of "the rational autonomy of individuals" (1988: 104), this does not mean supporting "the idea that the view of the individual should take precedence over the view of others" (1988: 104). In other words, the pursuit of individual rationality should not be seen as an end in itself, but needs to be embedded in a moral framework which recognises an inter-relationship between the well-being of individuals and that of others. Within this conception of education the teacher has a responsibility to encourage students to reflect on their own general moral framework and to consider whether there may be aspects which they need to modify.

While the Stenhouse research has been criticised for implying that the only alternative to the neutral chair strategy was that of didactic instructor (Stradling, 1984: 8), Stenhouse argued that the function of the project was to inform decisions which would be made in very different school situations, not to dictate solutions (in Stenhouse et al, 1982: 2). The research findings revealed that white pupils involved in both Strategies A and B (the neutral and the partisan chair) showed a moderately significant improvement in attitudes, with Strategy B students showing the most long-lasting change after 18 months.⁴ It should be noted that there were also individual students whose racism appeared to increase during the project. The lack of significant improvement with Strategy C students (although there was a small movement towards greater tolerance) may well have reflected the unwillingness of the drama teachers to define specific aims or principles of procedure, as well as a reserve about directing the students towards the area of 'race' if

⁴ A factor which did not appear to be taken into account, however, was that these students may have simply become more sensitized through direct teaching to 'appropriate' responses.

they did not enter it naturally. According to Bagley and Verma (1982: 4), the evidence from the majority of studies carried out in the field of teaching about 'race' have, on balance, produced favourable results. They nevertheless assert that curriculum innovation needs to be accompanied by support and reform within the whole school and furthermore, as recognised also by Stenhouse (Stenhouse et al, 1982: 20), curriculum change in schools cannot solve political problems: "The exploitation and deprivation of ordinary people inherent in Britain's class system must ultimately bear a heavy burden of responsibility for racism in society" (Bagley and Verma, 1982: 15).

Finally, there is a fundamental element of the 'Teaching About Race Relations' project which is pertinent to any teaching about 'race' and which cannot be ignored, namely, the level of consciousness of the teachers involved. Unless teachers have come themselves to understand the deep historical, economic, cultural and socio-political factors generating racist attitudes, they will not be in a position to help their students uncover these underlying structures. Discussion is therefore likely to remain at the surface level of individual attitudes and beliefs - the level of emotion and potential guilt - and as Hall (1981: 61) says "racism is deeply resistant to attempts at amelioration, good feeling, gentle reform". Stenhouse (Stenhouse et al, 1982: 18-20) records the withdrawal from the project of three teachers from a London school, their critique of the project including its focus on prejudice at a personal level, as opposed to racism, and the idea that learning about other cultures can lead to the elimination of racism. Underlying Stenhouse's description of the differences between these three and the other Strategy B teachers - in terms of their teaching experience, sophistication and political commitment - rests the question of varying levels of understanding about the nature of racism. This is not to suggest that understanding the structural roots of racism and its relation to ideology will automatically

enable a teacher to impart that knowledge in ways that are accessible to young people, but certainly without that knowledge a teacher entering into discussions of 'race' with students may soon be in troubled waters.

An interesting comparison with Stenhouse's project is the frequently quoted study by Miller (1967; 1969), with students who had left school revealing a strongly negative reaction and entrenchment of prejudice following teaching about 'race'. Miller's research was conducted amongst an all male population of over one thousand 15-21 year old day-release apprentices at a large technical college serving a largely working class community in the east end of London. Pre-testing revealed the majority of white students to be already highly prejudiced and Miller's findings were that the teaching which took place during liberal studies sessions - using a range of teaching materials including films, books, visiting speakers - generally resulted in increased levels of prejudice. The shorter the teaching time up to a length of three hours, the more harmful the effect. Miller suggested that teacher personality was also a factor, with gentler "tender-minder" staff apparently inducing more negative responses than "tough-minded" assertive colleagues. As with Stenhouse's study, there are significant question marks about the level of awareness of the nature of racism amongst the staff involved in teaching about 'race' and how well equipped they were to connect with their students' experiences in order to defuse "the racist time-bomb" (Hall, 1981).

Combatting racism in predominantly white schools

Given the complex nature of racism, reflecting deep structural divisions in our society, attempts to combat it within schools necessarily operate under severe constraints. Hatcher (1987) argues forcefully that we need "political answers to racism" and that "Teachers and educationists have to break down the barrier they have built, get involved in the political struggle for ERE [Education for Racial Equality]" (Hatcher,

1987: 7). However correct his analysis, this seems somewhat idealistic as a strategy for effecting change within predominantly white schools. While educationalists like Taylor (1985) and Gaine (1987), specifically concerned about racism in 'white areas', have rejected tokenism in multicultural education, they nevertheless face the necessity of having to start 'where teachers are at' in terms of suggesting feasible action. This too is the position of researchers wanting to work collaboratively with teachers on developing initiatives (Grugeon and Woods, 1990). Accounts of attempts to initiate whole school policies which are thought to be in any way meaningful (Massey, 1987; Roberts, 1988) stress the need for democratic procedures, a strong and clear sense of purpose, as well as considerable patience, given the strong tide of resistance to addressing Hall's "structured absence".

According to Troyna and Selman, "the rationale for multicultural/anti-racist education in multi-ethnic schools and colleges, and the initiatives which arise from it, cannot be transferred intact to predominantly white areas" (1989: 24). They argue that whereas in multi-ethnic areas the rationale for change is framed in terms of inequalities in 'selection' and 'who gets what', this has no relevance in largely white areas. Instead a more useful focus is that of 'learning' which refers to "the images and understanding students develop about themselves and their social world; the beliefs, values and ideologies which are nurtured and legitimated by their educational experiences" (Troyna, 1988: 5). Troyna furthermore proposes that issues of 'race' and racism can only be effectively addressed through more broadly conceived programmes of political education, in which racism is related to other oppressions (e.g. class, gender), as well as being placed in its historical, political and social

context.⁵ With a clearly different and less radical conception of political education, the Swann Committee nevertheless also argued that political education could "play a major part in countering and overcoming racism at both institutional and individual levels" (Swann, 1985: 336). To Carrington and Short (1987; 1989) anti-racist education is part of children's entitlement to political education. This should include developing their abilities to look critically at ideological information; to think and argue logically; to be open-minded and respect evidence; to be capable of empathy and humanitarianism; to explore issues of social justice, equality and human rights; and to extend their understanding of how power is exercised (Carrington and Short, 1989: 20-1). These aims have major implications for the kind of relationships in schools and classrooms since an inflexible "authoritarian environment (where didacticism prevails and where hierarchy, competition and individualism are revered) is less conducive to the development of pupils' political and moral autonomy than a democratic one, stressing participation, cooperation and collaboration" (1989: 21). This concern about pedagogy and the nature of relationships in schools and classrooms has become particularly apparent as accounts emerge of actual anti-racist/multicultural practice and initiatives (Troyna and Selman, 1989; Epstein and Sealey, 1990; Gugeon and Woods, 1990).

Troyna and Selman (1989), having worked in a predominantly white College of Further of Education on a 'bottom up' initiative intended as a catalyst for change, have proposed a

⁵ In a more ambitious vein Gus John (1987), in a call which extends into the streets beyond the school gates, speaks of the need for a transformation of the current system into "a genuine 'education for liberation' that sees education as a basic and fundamental right for all". While noting that, unlike in the black community, there has been no movement amongst the white working class to challenge their own oppressive education, he suggests that the fight against racism would be better served by people confronting their own particular oppression first, prior to linking their oppression with that of racism.

framework for multicultural and anti-racist education based on a course in which students learn about 'Rights' (the bulk of the content), 'Collaboration' (a way of working) and 'New Perspectives' (a way of reflecting on their own beliefs and experiences). The work of Epstein and Sealey (1990), based on predominantly white primary schools, focuses on the need for developing a whole-school context of equality. They argue that it is not possible to address issues of 'race' effectively unless the school has an affirming ethos in which the children are active participants and in which due regard is given to the pupils' own interests and affective concerns.

This concern with a collaborative, participative pedagogy also reflects developments within the World Studies/Global Education movement and teaching about human rights (Richardson, undated; Fisher and Hicks, 1985, Pike and Selby, 1988). The anachronism of trying to teach about issues of social justice and human rights within a dominating, authoritarian framework was indeed highlighted by Allport (1954: 511) at the end of his seminal study on prejudice in addressing the 'Imperatives of Intercultural Education':

"If segregation of the sexes or races prevails, if authoritarianism and hierarchy dominate the system, the child cannot help but learn that power and status are the dominant factors in human relationships. If, on the other hand, the school system is democratic, if the teacher and child are each respected units, the lesson of respect for the person will easily register. As in society at large the structure of the pedagogical system will blanket, and may negate, the specific intercultural lessons taught."

The same message emanated strongly from Trager and Yarrow's (1952) classic American study They Learn What They Live in which different groups of young children were taught by the same teachers using different methods, one emphasising active participation and equality and another emphasising hierarchy and the 'status quo'. With the continued pertinence of both these works written almost 40 years ago, combined with Tomlinson's findings that white attitudes on 'race' have undergone little change over the last 40 years, it would appear that despite all the increasingly comprehensive

research and available knowledge we have as yet made little actual progress in affecting the transmission of racism across generations.

Rationale for a project exploring racism with white students primarily through literature

Given the above analysis, it is fortunate that as humans we possess the capacity to resist deterministic pessimism. It would appear particularly necessary in the field of multicultural and anti-racist education in predominantly white areas (Taylor 1988: 3). Even writers who promote a deterministic view of social change nevertheless write in the hope of affecting the perceptions of individual readers.

My decision to devise a project with literature at its core, for a school in a predominantly white area, was undertaken in full knowledge of the limitations of addressing racism in isolation from change throughout the whole of a school's formal and informal curriculum. Nevertheless, as an outside individual (without a potential school in mind at the outset), I felt I had a reasonable chance of interesting a school in undertaking a university-linked research project relating to a literature course within its English department, compared with no chance at all of persuading a school to initiate a program of complete reform. It was certainly my hope, however, that the project itself might act as a catalyst in raising wider implications for the school as a whole.

Literature and the reading process

However, apart from the question of feasibility, there is the question of 'why literature'? As I see it, literature's prime quality is the ability to carry human voices across time, place, experience, society, culture. Having been brought up as a white, middle-class South African child - with all that entailed in terms of the construction of blinkered, racist childhood perceptions - I have personally found books written by writers from very different backgrounds a major resource in

enabling me to listen to other voices. Significant literature, to me, is that in which the lives of characters are represented in relation to deep currents in their society. Characters are contextualised, so that in so far as one observes them or empathises with them, one can learn something of what it is to be human in that time, that place, those circumstances. Literature is political and one's choice of literature is political, although the reader may of course ignore, or simply not see, the meanings that are there.⁶ My own belief in the potential power of literature is summed up in my introduction to an anthology explicitly concerned with young people coming into social and political consciousness (Naidoo, 1987):

"Literature has the tremendous quality of allowing us to engage imaginatively in the lives of others. It enables us to move beyond ourselves and our own experiences. If we allow ourselves to respond to it fully, it can be a great educator. For those of us brought up monoculturally, literature which springs from outside our own boundaries can be a life-line."

This remains a statement largely of potential. In questioning what it is in a text that invites or inhibits a reader, Meek writes that "it is not necessary for him (sic) to recognise his social milieu in the setting, but to find his interior fiction as part of a writer's intention" (1980: 36). One of my criteria for selecting key texts for the research project was that although some of the settings might be alien to the readers, the texts should contain enough points of connection for the readers to enable an imaginative leap and reveal a certain universality of "interior fiction". Both literature and drama offer a 'legitimate' arena for students to take on, at least temporarily, another 'reality'. According to Tolkien (1964: 36), the reader enters into a 'Secondary World' created

⁶ Even animal tales are political! How many adults passing on 'Brer Rabbit' tales explore with children how they connect to traditional African tales (of the little rabbit surviving against mightier forces by his wits) and the meanings these tales might have held for the black slaves who re-made them in America? (Lester, 1987)

by the writer.'⁷ Furthermore, in the role of 'spectator' or 'onlooker' (Harding, 1962) in this Secondary World, the reader is involved in not only responding to, but evaluating, what she or he perceives. As with the writer in the process of writing, the degree of involvement or detachment, conscious or unconscious engagement, retrospection or anticipation within the story is individually variable, with the reader's "shifting viewpoint" being "the point of coherence" (Benton, 1983: 72). Thus thirty students reading a story might be seen to produce thirty different readings. This does not preclude, however, not only the existence of common sources of difficulty in interpretation (Squire, 1964),⁸ but the fact that those personal readings will have been framed within shared cultural contexts, our separate personal lives being "determined by a wider public one" (Eagleton, 1985: 7). Part of that framing relates to the very manner in which a text is approached, for example the kind of expectations students may have of a 'literary' text (Gilbert, 1987). Gilbert views readers as "situated in culturally determined discursive traditions, and the effects of these traditions determine the nature of the reading a text will be given and the meaning assigned to it" (1987: 245).

Freund points out that one thing in common between different theories of reader-response is the assumption that "the practice of supposedly impersonal and disinterested reading is

⁷ I suspect Tolkien's conception of a Secondary World is different from that of a writer directly exploring social reality through fiction. Whereas Tolkien refers to the reader's move back out into the Primary World in terms of "the spell is broken: the magic, or rather art, has failed", the writer exploring social reality may actually want the reader to move back and forth between the two worlds, raising questions about both.

⁸ Squire identified six sources of difficulty creating problems for adolescents in reading fiction: failure to grasp the meaning; reliance on stock responses; 'happiness binding' or the desire for a happy outcome; critical predispositions such as the story should be 'true to life'; irrelevant associations; the search for certainty.

never innocent and always infected by suppressed or unexamined presuppositions" (1987: 10).⁹ In other words, no text is self-sufficient. Louise Rosenblatt has been asserting since 1938 against the formalists' prioritising of the text, that reading is a transaction between reader and text (1938; 1978; 1985):

"...the term transaction, as I use it, implies that the reader brings to the text a network of past experiences in literature and in life. (The author's text also is seen as resulting from a personal and social transaction...) In the reading situation, the poem - the literary work - is evoked during the transaction between reader and text." (1985: 35)

'We read what we are' or 'we are what we read'?

While individual readings or 'evocations' of the text are in one sense unique, they will, however, also reflect certain common cultural assumptions on the basis of common frames of reference developed within a society. Given that racism - with apartheid its most extreme manifestation - segregates our experiences both physically and mentally in varying degrees, I have been particularly curious to examine the effect of racist frames of reference on the reading of fiction. As a writer of children's fiction (Naidoo, 1985b; 1989), attempting to bring alive something of both the oppression and resistance of black South African children (which I myself never perceived as a child), I see myself using my imagination as a weapon against that segregation. Indeed I hope to take my readers into narratives and on journeys which will involve them in asking questions and challenging injustice, at least mentally, through being absorbed in the story. What actually happens as they read and what happens when they leave the story is something I do not know, although I do at times

⁹ The point is vividly made by two lines she quotes (Freund, 1987: 2) from a poem by Wallace Stevens, 'Phosphor Reading by His Own Light':

"It is difficult to read. The page is dark.
Yet he knows what it is that he expects."

receive letters from individual readers which reveal questions spilling over into life.¹⁰ So although by studying or deconstructing a writer's work we may perceive certain 'messages', hidden or otherwise, within it, how individual readers receive those messages can be problematic.

Purves and Beach's (1972) comprehensive review of research on reader responses to literature indicates readers' preferences for works to which they feel they can relate personally. Purves and Beach note that identification with a character or situation easily leads to projection, with a reader imputing values and supplying background not contained in the text. Furthermore, reading material conflicting with a reader's world view is liable to be misinterpreted with readers being highly selective in their interpretation, bearing out Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance. This proposes that people will not attend to that which they perceive is dissonant with their present frame of reference, although Hatt (1976) suggests that this avoidance is not as universal as Festinger suggests. Zimet (1976: 17) comments, in her important study on a wide range of research into the relationship between reading and prejudice:

"Both personal testimony and empirical research strongly suggest that while our attitudes, values and behaviours may be influenced by what we read, when left to our own initiative we read what we are. In other words, we select our reading to support our predispositions rather than in order to change them."

¹⁰ From my writer's perspective I certainly like to think that literature can be more than Eagleton's (1985) "moral technology" whose liberal humanist function in modern capitalist society is to promote depoliticised sensitivity by producing "an historically peculiar form of human subject who is sensitive, receptive, imaginative and so on... about *nothing in particular*" (1985: 5). The writer Chinua Achebe (1989), commenting on the decision of a retired German judge not to retire to a lucrative consultancy in pre-independent Namibia after reading Achebe's novel Things Fall Apart, also questions "the fashionable claim made even by writers that literature can do nothing to alter our social and political condition. Of course it can!"

The critical qualification here is, however, "when left to our own devices" and Zimet's review offers evidence of studies suggesting that it is possible to modify attitudes and behaviour so that "we are what we read". It is the circumstances under which the reading is done (including, for example, related teaching) which Zimet claims "will determine which will have the greatest impact, the reader or the printed message." (1976: 17)

Studies of reading and 'attitude change'

As one might expect, studies of attitude change related to young people's reading such as those detailed by Zimet as well as Lynch (1987: 43-4) have produced variable results depending on a range of circumstances. The majority of these reported studies have had positive if limited outcomes, although it is not possible to know to what extent the young people whose attitudes 'improved' were not simply showing more sensitivity to what they felt was 'expected' on re-test. It is also apparent that without reinforcement in the child's total environment, any positive attitude change is also likely to disappear rapidly (Zimet, 1976: 20; Festinger, 1964). A major drawback of these studies which claim positive results is the lack of data on long-term effects.

A further issue relates to whether one can separate the effect of particular teachers from that of the particular books to which they have introduced their pupils. While Zimet (1976: 15-6) points to a number of studies, based on personal testimony, which confirm how some adults and children perceive themselves to have been influenced by key books, Ree (1991: 19) inextricably connects certain memorable teachers and literary influences:

"...I recognise that my philosophy of life and even the career I chose to follow were largely determined by such reading - or should I say, by such men?"

Given that a relationship with a teacher might continue over a period of time, the relationship itself might, in the right

circumstances, provide a reinforcing framework to support individual reperception.

The move towards ethnography and the contextualising of reading and readers

Investigations since those reported by Zimet and Lynch have tended to move away from the limited traditional 'laboratory' design of test, experiment, re-test, to an ethnographic focus on the process of students' written and verbal responses in the classroom at the time of reading. The shift towards ethnography indicates increasing recognition of the complexity not only of the reading process as a transaction between reader and text, but of locating the question of attitudes and attitude change in a total social context. The ethnographer takes a holistic approach in investigating the situation as it is and discovering what is problematic, rather than attempting to control selected variables according to a pre-specified coding system (Delamont and Hamilton, 1986).

Stredder's (1978) study of Jeffcoate teaching Dickinson's The Devil's Children (1970)¹¹ to a white majority, multi-ethnic first year secondary class concludes with the necessity of examining the hidden curriculum; the teacher's role and teaching methods, particularly in providing situations in which students can explore and communicate their own feelings; and the role and involvement of researchers and teachers in collaborating on curriculum innovation.

¹¹ Jeffcoate's account can be read in Positive Image (1979: 92-6). Stredder's evaluation is particularly interesting given Jeffcoate's stated concern not to interfere with the attitudes of his students. His objectives reveal the confusion in his thinking about teacher 'neutrality', namely "that the white children should come to understand and respect another way of life" at the same time as intending "to explore the children's reactions without necessarily wanting, in any primary sense, certain outcomes rather than others" (Stredder, 1978: 84-5).

Treacher (1983; 1984/5), combining the role of teacher and researcher, provides self-critical and valuable insight into interactions and responses in a majority white, multi-ethnic class of fourth year boys with whom she read Richard Wright's powerful autobiography Black Boy (first published 1945). Her intention was to examine how literature might increase understanding between the different ethnic groups in the class. In particular she "wanted an improved awareness on the part of the white boys of the historical position of the blacks" (1983: 9). Confronted by the embarrassment and vulnerability of black students in the class, through the novel's exposure of black pain and degradation, Treacher re-examined her own position of control as a white, middle-class teacher and her traditional pedagogy of teacher-led discussions. On the one hand she had been attempting to fulfil a complete Humanities programme in one isolated English project, while on the other she had used her traditional authority to side-step any potentially confrontational current issues of racism. Furthermore the "historical and sociological explanations often shifted the emphasis from the narrative where, observably, the book's meaning were most accessible" (1984/5: 24). Treacher recommends the need for teachers to create space for students to express their views openly (Richardson, undated) and to connect with their students' experiences (Searle, 1977; Hall, 1981), as well as to introduce black literature in the context of language of resistance.

Cosway and Rodney's (1987) account of teaching Jan Needle's My Mate Shofiq (1979) interweaves their dual perspectives as a white and a black teacher respectively working together with fourth year all-white secondary students, who were encouraged to be honest in both verbal and written responses. Rodney (who had strong reservations about using this book from the start because of its stereotypical portrayal of Shofiq's family) notes that the students' written responses did not reflect the racism of the discussions. In the latter, racist comments were

made by a minority, who were the most vocal students, outweighing the larger but quieter number of more tolerant pupils.

Cosway and Rodney's account examines where readers are placed in the text - alongside the white protagonist who gradually discards his racist perceptions - but the teachers find no evidence of readers with strongly racist frames of reference similarly shifting. In other words, these readers did not appear to fulfil the role of the text's "implied reader" (Iser, 1978). Indeed Cosway believes the book reinforced opinions in the class, with the tolerant becoming slightly more tolerant and the intolerant becoming more prejudiced, dismissing any challenge as 'fiction'. It appears that those with no definite opinions at the beginning tended towards a slightly more tolerant view. In other words:

"The effect of the book, it seems, varies widely according to the sensitivity of the reader, the sophistication (necessary in order to recognise the irony) and the degree of prejudice with which the text is approached" (Cosway and Rodney, 1987: 23).

In addition, Cosway questions the effect of a number of other common set-books written with a similar structure by white writers - where a white protagonist begins with a negative view of black people but is gradually 'sensitized', coming to recognise a common humanity.

Hann (undated) has also reported on My Mate Shofiq (one of the most contentious of children's fiction texts of recent years) in her useful study of reader responses by middle and secondary students in a multi-ethnic area, as part of a 'Fiction and Multicultural Education' project. With the readers in the project self-selected and well-motivated, Hann noted differences in response to a range of texts in terms of various factors such as the children's background and cultural preconceptions, age and experience, including their experience as readers. Hann suggested age and reader-sophistication to be significant factors in how children responded to Needle's

novel, with older readers being better able to perceive the author's intention in explicitly showing racism.

The research project

The form my own research project took - with a particular focus on the responses of the students as readers - developed partly out of my curiosity as a writer attempting to uncover something of 'the reader as ideologist' (Hollindale, 1988: 17). How do readers' frames of reference affect their reading and the ways in which they follow or diverge from the paths offered to them within texts as "implied readers"? My notion of reading accords closely with Rosenblatt's model of the writer and reader each contributing their own "network of past experiences" (1985: 35) and frames of reference in the transaction. I was furthermore attracted by the possibilities of reader-response study and an ethnographic approach, as characterised by Benton (1988: 27-9): reflexivity of the researcher who forms part of the phenomena as a 'participant' rather than an 'objective' observer; recognition of the context of reading; description leading to the theorising of the process of response; and flexibility of enquiry, given that one is not tied to testing out a preconceived theory.

My original aims were to investigate the potential for certain works of literature which contain strong indictments of racism from the writer's perspective to extend white students' empathies; to challenge ethnocentric and racist assumptions and concepts; and to develop critical thinking about the nature of our society. By using various reader-response strategies I hoped to uncover something of the reading transaction amongst a class of white teenage readers. Apart from the personal perceptual filters through which each student would view and respond to a text, could I detect the workings of a more common filter connected with 'race'? My concern was not only to uncover the students' frames of reference but to observe whether any apparent shifts occurred in these frames through their reading of the selected texts,

through discussions, or through other specific interventions related to the texts.

I proposed, therefore, to set up a year's course of literature for an all-white class of third year (Year 9) secondary students through which issues of racism could be explored, with the selected books all being written from a perspective strongly indicting racism.¹² I would not be the teacher but a participant observer who collaborated with the teacher, my presence being explained to the class in terms of my interest in their responses to the literature they would be reading. The students were not, however, to be informed that I was a writer of books for young people and I did not wish them to be told explicitly about my interest in racism, although it was likely that the latter would emerge as the year progressed. I felt this partial explanation of the research would be justified on two counts. Firstly, I did not wish the students to falsify or tailor their responses (albeit unconsciously), either in terms of my perceived interest or what they might feel to be 'appropriate'. Secondly, it was important that the course be perceived in terms of mainstream literary standards and not one only relevant to an exploration of racism.

At the outset I had five main objectives. The first was to establish initially what were the significant frames of reference amongst the students in relation to 'race'. I envisaged a survey (not to be associated in the students' minds with the course) which would provide me with a limited amount of quantitative data and information that might not otherwise come to light and which might prove of use in interpreting some of my qualitative data. Secondly, using selected works of literature, I intended to develop, in collaboration with the teacher, ways of exploring these texts

¹² I decided, for instance, not to use Jan Needle's My Mate Shofiq, although it dealt with racism in a British context, because of the problematic position of the "implied reader" as mentioned above in the studies by Cosway and Rodney (1987) and Hann (undated).

which encouraged empathy with the perspective of characters who were victims of racism but who resisted it. There was to be a strong emphasis on students responding directly to the texts, for example in reading journals and in small group discussions. I wanted them also in drama to explore themes related to those being raised in the literature. Thirdly, I wanted to bring in relevant visitors, especially black artists, to work with the students, as an important element in the project. Fourthly, it was my intention to document and monitor the processes at work, particularly those which indicated any change in perceptions, or obstacles to change. Finally, I intended to gather the students' evaluations of the year's course and at the end of the project to investigate whether there was any notable change in their frames of reference relating to 'race'.

While literature remained at the core of the course, towards the end of the year, circumstances led to a new direction and issues of racism were addressed directly with the students without the intervening medium of fiction. This move from fiction to 'real life' provided a new and contrasting dimension in which to study student responses.

As an action-researcher I acknowledged a dual role. On the one hand as activator and instigator of the project, I had devised a year's course of literature which I hoped would have the maximum chance of challenging racist frames of reference. On the other hand, as researcher, I was required to observe as accurately and fully as possible what seemed to be occurring. Both roles involved subjective judgement and this study is largely ethnographic in character. My intended primary focus was to be on the interaction of students and texts. Recognising the close web of content and context, when devising my research, I had envisaged a collaborative learning framework within the class - one in which the students would not feel "over-weighted" by the teacher's authority (Hall, 1981). In the event, although the reader-response methodology

ensured a certain amount of space for students to express themselves without being directly led by the teacher, the classroom I found myself observing was far more traditionally teacher-centred than I had anticipated. I thus rapidly found my intended primary focus widening from that of students and texts to one encompassing the context of the traditional classroom in which the texts were being presented and 'constructed'. The classroom in turn could not be extrapolated from the school, nor the school from the society.

Outline of chapters

Having provided the background and rationale of my research in this chapter, in Chapter Two I give a brief overview of the context and content of the project, prior to describing in Chapters Three and Four results of two surveys of racist perceptions amongst the student group, administered before and after the course. The survey data provide a descriptive frame for developing certain insights into the subsequent ethnographic data which form the bulk of this thesis. In Chapter Five I elaborate on the general methodology and context of the project in relation to the school, classroom and teacher. Aspects of methodology and context particular to different texts and activities will be discussed in the subsequent chapters in which I then proceed chronologically through the course, focusing largely on the students' responses to four novels (Chapters Six, Seven, Eight and Ten). Chapter Nine details responses to a science session on 'race' classification prior to study of a South African novel. In Chapter Eleven I discuss some of the approaches to the texts through drama. Chapters Twelve and Thirteen deal with the students' responses as the focus shifted from fiction to reality through a television series and a week of drama workshops involving visitors concerned with racism in their working lives. Chapter Fourteen covers the students' own evaluations of the course while in Chapter Fifteen I present my conclusions, raising some of the problems and possibilities in challenging racism for English teachers.

CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

Context - the county

It was in the context of a county where few black people live - and of wide-spread "not-speaking" (Hall, 1985) - that I decided to set up my research project. In a context where there is no significant black community to challenge monocultural and racist complacency and to create pressure for change, one has to ask how schools can be encouraged to take on board this task. In 1987, when I drew up my research proposal, the traditionally Conservative County Council had still made no official response to the Swann Report. That remained the position in 1989 at the end of the project's classroom stage, although the Local Education Authority was by then in the process of including reference to cultural diversity in its Curriculum Policy document. Elected members of the Council's Education Sub-Committee twice refused (1987/8) to bid for government Educational Support Grant funding for multicultural projects proposed by advisers, on the grounds of irrelevance. The LEA's contribution to post-Swann work at the time I proposed my project was thus limited to supporting World Studies in-service training for 15-20 teachers annually; sending 15 teachers to attend a 20-day D.E.S. Multicultural Education course during 1987/88; and providing some support to a small development education organisation. Nevertheless it was my hope that by setting up a university-linked research project which related to curriculum development in English, it would activate some LEA support. This did indeed occur, details of which are given later on in this chapter, in the section on funding.

Context - school, teacher and class

An outline of key events in development of the research is provided in the Project Chronology (Appendix 1.3). When initially devising the research I had no particular school in mind and, if necessary, I was prepared to look for one in a neighbouring authority. However, I was fortunate to find a

Catholic Comprehensive willing to take it on. St Benedict's¹ had no multicultural/anti-racist policy but the senior management was in the process of reviewing the school's philosophy in consultation with staff. The school had a copy of the report by the Working Party on Catholic Education in a Multiracial, Multicultural Society (1984) and draft papers of the school's philosophy included references to racism being unacceptable and the importance of developing in pupils a sense of justice.

The school population was predominantly white. There were no black teachers and of approximately 1200 students, I was informed about half a dozen were black. There was significant European diversity however, with about 10% of students speaking languages other than English at home. A significant minority were also of Irish descent. The school drew its students from a wide area, largely from the conurbation but also from some of the surrounding rural districts.

The Head of English was openly committed to challenging racism and extremely enthusiastic about the project. His support was crucial in having it accepted by the school and his department. He was keen to be the project teacher, and almost certainly would have been had he not received promotion to another school. Given his personal commitment to developing education for equality and justice, had he remained, the outcomes both within the class and in the wider school would very possibly have been different. In order to gain acceptance for the project, I had however started from the position that I would work with whoever was prepared to work with me, knowing my agenda. The teacher who volunteered to take on the project, Alan Parsons, headed the Drama department and in the course of the year became Acting Head of English. He was interested in the course I proposed because it appeared "innovative" and he was keen, as he said in a pre-project

¹ The names of the school, teaching staff and students have all been changed to preserve anonymity.

interview, to see whether it was possible to measure the effects of "a specific preoccupation", although not necessarily that of racism. He further acknowledged not to have thought much about issues of racism but said he was increasingly intolerant of it, having become much more alert to it through the influence of the out-going Head of English.

Although Alan Parsons accepted the proposed methodology for the project which reduced areas of teacher control, theoretically endorsing ideas about developing student participation in their own learning, his personal teaching style and way of relating to the students remained essentially traditional and largely didactic. This affected the shape of the research which would have been different had the project teacher been someone fully committed to establishing a collaborative and supportive classroom framework, within which to explore ideas of social justice and equality.

The selected class formed part of the school's third year "middle band" (Year 9). It consisted of eighteen boys and twelve girls, aged thirteen to fourteen who had been taught by Alan Parsons in the first year. It was agreed that I would be introduced to the students under my non-married name. I was concerned that, if possible, they should not identify my particular interest as a researcher, and I felt that my surname might be a give-away. In addition the school had copies of my book Journey to Jo'burg (1985b), published under my married name, and we wanted to keep open the option of using the book on the course.

Data

At the end of the summer term in 1988 before the course began, a survey I had devised for revealing racist/non-racist perceptions was administered to the entire second year. Students were asked to complete a number of open-ended sentences as well as to respond along a scale of 'agree-disagree' to a list of statements. The project course

took place between September 1988 and July 1989 and the same survey was re-administered to the same year group of students sixteen months later, by then aged fourteen to fifteen, four months after the end of the course. I was not known by the students to be associated with the survey as its administration was not carried out by me personally. The students were assured that only the researcher - and not the school - would have access to their completed papers, to preserve anonymity. Apart from the survey, all my data were of a qualitative rather than quantitative nature. Throughout the year I kept a diary of my observations. The students all kept reading journals in which they were asked to write their responses to what they were reading and experiencing on the course. At times they were given sheets with selected passages or poems and asked to jot down their first responses around the text. Other sheets involved tasks such as writing a character's stream of thoughts at a certain moment in time, or giving their own advice to a particular character. All class sessions and small group discussions were tape recorded. The final week at the end of the year, involving five afternoon sessions with dramatist/director Olusola Oyeleye was videoed. Interviews were conducted with the Headteacher, the class teacher, all the girls, mostly in pairs, and a number of the boys, in small groups. I felt it was particularly important to get at the perceptions of the girls as they generally participated much less openly in class than the boys.

Course

The course of literature (Appendices 1.1; 1.3) was designed to explore the students' understandings of - and responses to - racism in a variety of contexts and hopefully to challenge racist thinking. Although they were reading and responding to fiction, in discussion they inevitably drew on their perceptions of reality. Underlying links between the different books were not, where possible, openly drawn to their

attention so as to see if, and how, the students would make connections themselves.

The sequence in which the books were introduced was important. We started with Buddy by Nigel Hinton (1983), where the context was familiar and where racism is only a side issue. I wanted to be able to observe the students' responses to literature more generally as well as to map their initial levels of awareness of the dimension of racism in the book. The author suggests links between different oppressions with Buddy, a white working class lad whose mother has left home, being befriended by black twins - also outsiders in an otherwise snobbish class where racist jokes are openly condoned by the teacher. The second novel was Hans Peter Richter's Friedrich (1978; first German publication 1961), focusing on racism in a European context. The book takes the form of a kind of diary by a non-Jewish boy charting the rise and fall of his friendship with a Jewish boy in Germany between 1925 and 1942. From Europe we moved to the American south in the 1930s with Mildred Taylor's Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (1987; first American publication 1976) where events are seen through the perceptive, indignant and resistant eyes of nine year old Cassie. This was the first class novel the students had read by a black author. It was followed by Waiting for the Rain by Sheila Gordon (1987). Set in South Africa, it maps the course of a relationship between Frikkie (nephew of a white farmer) and Tengo (son of the farm's black foreman). The reader is shifted from one characters's consciousness to the other. Tengo's growth in awareness of himself and his position leads to a final confrontation between the two as young men. The book's strength is that racism is located in the structure of social relationships, revealing that it is more than personal prejudice. This is also the case in Friedrich and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and I was particularly interested to know whether any students would be able to perceive this.

My original intention was to complete the course with literature which focused on racism in a British context. We were going to use a number of short stories, but found ourselves running out of time. In the event, the students were only able to read Farrukh Dhondy's 'K B W' (1976) and although I had hoped to include at least one story featuring anti-Irish racism, lack of time finally prevented this.

Attempts were made to provide students with some knowledge of context where this was unfamiliar. For instance, they viewed a number of videos relating to a number of the texts and listened to some author interviews. Apart from certain additional background material being provided for everyone, students were able to borrow books (mainly fiction) for personal reading from a specially selected loan collection (Appendix 1.2). They were also at times engaged in related activities, for example deconstructing two versions of South African history in connection with Waiting for the Rain.

In addition to a number of lessons being spent on inter-related poetry, throughout the year drama sessions were linked to issues arising in the literature, although not always overtly. Themes included victimisation through 'jokes'; child/adult conflicts; status and power in teacher/parent relationships; personal experiences of injustice; inter-school rivalry related to status, power and prejudice; master/slave relationships; emigration from the Caribbean to the 'Motherland'; arrival in a new country and encounters with racist behaviour. The drama method of 'hotseating' - involving volunteers answering questions in role - was used directly in connection with the literature.

On realising that we were running out of time for addressing the British context, I arranged for the students to see the BBC series Getting to Grips with Racism (BBC Television for Schools, 1988) during Religious Education time in the final term. A senior teacher (who had attended a D.E.S.

Multicultural Education course) agreed to lead these sessions and discussions. This brought discussions of racism out of the arena of understanding literature and human relationships in general - and very directly into the arena of considering themselves and their society. I was present during these sessions, which meant that the students were thereafter able to identify my interest as very obviously extending beyond their responses to literature. In addition, during this period, the class learnt of my married name and of my identity as a writer.

Visitors were a significant element of the course in terms of the intention to challenge perspectives. The writer Millie Murray agreed to be hotseated as the black twin Charmian from Buddy, ten years on, and then as Charmian's mother - switching from London English to Jamaican creole. Later Millie returned to be hotseated as Cassie, Cassie's mother and grandmother in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. The class was involved in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Kristallnacht - which occurred during the reading of Friedrich - with a visit from an elderly Jewish couple, Dr and Mrs Engel, who had escaped from Vienna a few months after the Nazi invasion. Black drama director Richard Finch devised two workshops for the students relating to Nazi persecution; the first on the theme of 'the outsider' and the second on survival. The latter was accompanied by a visit to the Anne Frank exhibition. A science session by two teachers, one black and one white - Mike Vance and John Siraj-Blatchford - was designed to raise questions about classification and the notion of 'race', as an introduction to the South African novel. The Caribbean writer James Berry performed and spoke about some of his poems which, as he says, "reflect two cultures" (1988) - sometimes distinct, sometimes merging. His visit took place at the time the students were experiencing drama involving issues of migration, as well as viewing the Getting to Grips with Racism programme on immigration with a Senior Teacher in Religious Education time.

In the final 'Media Week', dramatist/director Olusola Oyeleye led the students during five afternoon workshops in which they met a variety of people, the intention being that they develop their own ideas on what should go into a TV programme about racism for young people in a largely white area like their own. The week included interviews, role playing, improvisations and discussion. The most important resources were intended to be the visitors, namely Gillian Klein (author of Reading into Racism and editor of Multicultural Teaching) focusing on racism in books and the role of teachers; Reverend Kennedy Bedford and Sadie Kenway (British Council of Churches Race Relations Unit) focusing on deportations and the issue of sanctuary; Chris Gaine (teacher-trainer and author of No Problem Here) and community activist Saleem Gillings, continuing the focus on deportations, as well as on common manifestations of racism such as jokes; Millie Murray focusing on questions of stereotyping and language, with Olusola and herself offering examples from their own experience. Improvisations subsequently developed by the students were videoed and discussed on the final day with Peter Evans, BBC producer of Getting to Grips with Racism.

The year ended with evaluation in a variety of forms, including a session with Chris Gaine. The second survey was carried out four months after the end of the project, allowing time for the dust to settle.

Steering Group

A steering group was formed to oversee the project during its classroom stage and consider the wider implications for the school. In order to ensure that a black perspective was represented, help was sought from people from outside the County, namely, my university supervisor Dr Peter Figueroa; David Lake, a headteacher and vice-chairperson of Watford Afro-Caribbean Association and community activist Saleem Gillings. In addition the group consisted of the LEA's Senior Secondary School Adviser and the English Adviser, the school's

Head and Senior Teacher, the regional Arts Association Literature Officer, as well as the class teacher and myself. Although one of the fundamental questions raised by the Steering Group concerned dissemination of the project within the school, this remained limited and will be dealt with in Chapter Five.

Funding

I made extensive applications for funding while setting up the project which finally came from several sources. Through my appointment as a part-time Curriculum Support Teacher attached to the county's English Advisory team crucial support was provided by the LEA, details of which are given later concerning the preparatory stage of the project (Chapter 5: 116). Other funding came from the Sarum St Michael Educational Charity, the British Council of Churches Race Relations Unit, and the regional Arts Association. The major part of the cost of visiting artists was however borne by the LEA through an Arts Fund. The school's English department purchased sets of the required texts, and a donation from the author Sheila Gordon offset the cost of having to purchase hardback copies of her book before it was available in paperback.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FIRST SURVEY, JULY 1988

Purpose

Although the major part of the research was to be of a qualitative and ethnographic nature, I nevertheless thought it useful to include a survey providing supplementary data, some of which could be quantified, based on the students' statements of their perceptions, feelings, values and beliefs relating to issues of 'race'. I wanted the survey to be administered across the year group both before and after the course in order:

- to help paint a broad, descriptive picture of views held within the project class and the year group as a whole;
- to gather some idea of how typical the project class was at the time of the initial survey;
- to gather indications of any possible changes both in the project class and across the year group by the time of the second survey;
- to tap interesting individual responses within the project group - i.e. potential 'triangulation' data - which might otherwise not come openly to light in the classroom, and without students associating the questionnaire with the project;
- to identify from the first survey students in the project class who might provide a particular focus for the research e.g. those with scores at either extreme on a scale of racist/non-racist views;
- to be able to provide the school with the sort of descriptive data which could be of use in raising awareness amongst staff.

In summary, the survey was not intended to provide sophisticated comparative data but rather to provide a broad descriptive overview from which might arise useful discriminations and insights.

Concerns in construction of survey

Every survey has its limitations, particularly one which is attempting to tap into respondents' attitudes. For instance Miller (1967: 26-7) has criticised straightforward surveys in which subjects are aware of what is the socially desirable response. Given, however, the supplementary nature of my quantitative data, I was not prepared to go the lengths he did in embedding critical questions within an array of other camouflage items. Even embedding items in this way cannot guarantee complete validity in attitude measurement. I also had to devise a survey which could be administered within the space of a 40 minute lesson period.

One fundamental problem for me, however, was how to develop a framework for eliciting racist perceptions without resorting to constructs which themselves derived from a racist frame of reference. For instance, the Bagley-Verma Opinion Questionnaire (Bagley and Verma, 1975; Stenhouse et al, 1982: 298-301) asks subjects to respond with 'Yes', '?' or 'No' to the question 'Which of the following do you favour, approve of, or believe in?'. The specified items included not only individuals such as 'Enoch Powell' and 'Martin Luther King', but generalised groups such as 'Pakistanis', 'Asian Neighbours' and 'Jamaican Bus Conductors'. In the latter cases, a respondent was thus asked to make a generalised response to a generalised category of people. The charge could be laid that the questionnaire itself was thus trapped into promulgating essentially racist constructs. Bagley and Verma (1975: 244) show awareness of an ethical dilemma in constructing their questionnaire for measuring stereotypes. Here they used the 'semantic differential' format, asking respondents to rate various 'ethnic groups' in terms of contrasting pairs of adjectives such as 'Clean-Dirty', 'Trustworthy-Untrustworthy', 'Civilized-Uncivilized'. In order that respondents were not visually presented with an undesirable trait next to the name of an ethnic group, Bagley and Verma placed the favourable stereotype first in each case, despite the probability of creating a bias in that

direction and thus restricting valid interpretation to internal comparisons between responses to various ethnic groups.

I was not fully able to escape the same problem in my own questionnaire, although I attempted to modify the degree to which students were led into responding in terms of generalised stereotypes. Rather than using the semantic differential type question, I used open-ended sentence formulation to elicit possible stereotypes (Figueroa, 1989). Section A of the survey (Appendix 2.1) involved respondents answering a couple of brief, personal 'setting-at-ease' questions about travel, followed by Section B with an initial self-affirming question 'When I think of myself I think...'. The pattern then shifted to 'When I think of English people I think...', proceeding on to 'Irish people', 'Asian people', 'West Indian people', 'South Africa' and finally 'My experience of people of another colour from my own is...'. .

There were still problems with some of these formulations. For instance 'Asian people' is a generalisation suggesting a common identity shared by people of many different backgrounds. The term could technically be taken to refer to people from countries as far apart and varied as Japan, Malaya, India or Pakistan although the formulation 'people of Asia' would have tended to encourage this construction. However I was more interested in eliciting ideas and images associated with people in Britain seen as being of Asian origin. The term 'Asian people' inevitably reinforces the construction of their identity in terms of an Asian origin, rather than a British one, or a black British one. However, had I used the political term 'black British people', it would have been unlikely to elicit responses which included people framed as 'Asians'. I wanted to tap into possible 'ethnic' assumptions since "ethnicism, like racism, involves assumptions, often only implicit and unstated, which are

false, distorted, misapplied or over-generalised." (Figueroa, 1986)

The phrase 'West Indian people' presents related difficulties. 'People of the West Indies' would have suggested people living in the Caribbean itself, while the term 'Caribbean people' or 'Afro-Caribbeans' might not have been familiar to a number of students. On the other hand asking for a response to 'black British' following one to 'Asian people' would implicitly undermine the concept of 'black' as a political term for all people not considered white who share a common experience of racism.

The open-ended sentences had to be completed before students were given Section C, hereafter referred to as the Racist Perceptions Scale. This comprised closed choice responses to sixteen statements, along a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Eleven of these were statements about feelings, behaviour and the way things should be, involving either explicit rejection or endorsement of racist values. The remaining five were essentially cognitive matters - items of information or misinformation - on which students were asked to comment, make an assessment or judgement. All the statements were selected on the basis that they represent the sort of views that are in common currency or dispute.

The sixteen items on the Racist Perceptions Scale were equally divided between racist and non-racist formulations, randomly sequenced, with scoring depending on the direction of the response, to avoid the problem of students falling into a response set. A low score indicated a non-racist tendency, a high score a racist tendency. For instance, a response of 'Strongly Agree' (SA) or 'Agree' (A) to 'It would be good if our school had more black students', scored 0; 'Undecided' (U) scored 1; and 'Disagree' (D) or 'Strongly Disagree' (SD) scored 2. The scoring of a response to 'Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun' worked in the

opposite direction. Agreement scored 2, indecision 1, and disagreement 0. The five point scale (SA, A, U, D, SD) allowed respondents some flexibility in assessing their own positions but was collapsed to three points for scoring purposes. Apart from being simpler, there was a particular advantage to having only three possible scores (0,1,2) per item. It was considerably easier when looking either at an individual's score sheet, or at a spread sheet of scores on the 16 items for a whole class, to get an immediate picture of any patterns, trends or significant features.

The scoring of certain items was, however, problematic. Some adjustments were made following a pilot survey, particularly in relation to items which essentially concerned information, rather than explicit values (see 'Trial Survey' described below). It would be possible for a respondent to disagree with the statement such as "There isn't racism in our area" either from a position of concern or non-concern. For instance it would be possible for a respondent to acknowledge that racism was present, while thinking "So what?" The item 'West Indians have a good sense of rhythm' was intended to tap stereotypical thinking and agreement was taken to indicate a racist perception. However it could be argued that disagreement with the item (which obtained the non-racist score of 0) likewise endorsed a stereotype that West Indians do not have a good sense of rhythm. Respondents taking the undecided position on this item (scoring 1) might actually have been indicating an unwillingness to stereotype. In retrospect the item would have been better phrased 'All West Indians have a good sense of rhythm', although there is still a strong probability that as it stood the item elicited more agreement than would have been the case for a statement about British people having a good sense of rhythm. Similarly, it is possible that an undecided response to 'People who come to Britain should behave like the British' might have indicated genuine unwillingness to stereotype, rather than plain indecision. Given these possibilities of interpretation, it is important to look at

individual and group scores, particularly on problematic items, in context rather than in isolation.

The final Section D, entitled 'About Yourself', was designed to elicit information about the respondent's degree of contact or friendships with people of another colour, as well as her/his gender and age. This was followed by a request for any comments connected with the questionnaire.

The use of the word 'colour' both in Section B ('My experience of people of another colour from my own is...') and in Section D was problematic given its semantic links to 'coloured', a word still in current usage in the local white community. The common defence of 'coloured' in terms of "I thought it was politer" unwittingly reveals deep-seated negative connotations still attached to 'black'. I could not replace 'people of another colour from my own' with 'black' as that would be assuming the respondents would all inevitably be white. Nor would the word 'culture' have been sufficiently focused for my concern. I was also not prepared to use the term 'race', given the common misunderstanding of 'race' as a biological concept rather than a social construct without scientific validity.

While opting therefore for the 'people of another colour' formulation within the questionnaire, I felt it would be important for the issues of the word 'coloured' to be taken up early with the project students, in a non-didactic format. Problems, however, arose in interpretation of responses to the major part of Section D, which led to my only using the information on gender and age. I shall discuss this later.

Trial survey

A trial survey was piloted in April 1988 with two second year classes (one class of Band 1 - 2 and the other Band 3 - 4) in a rural, predominantly white mixed Comprehensive. The trial school matched the project school in that it was a banded

mixed Comprehensive with mainly white students, but it differed in being non-denominational and drawing its students from rural areas, whereas the project school students were almost all Catholic and mainly urban.

The trial survey comprised all four sections previously mentioned. At this initial stage there were 20 statements in the Racist Perceptions Scale, slightly more than half being matters of information as opposed to explicit expression of value positions. This trial run enabled me to identify items which elicited ambiguous responses. These were then either eliminated or re-shaped. The question of internal consistency between items was brought to the fore, in particular whether responses to the information items did indeed measure similar tendencies as responses to the explicit value statements. Although attitude can certainly affect perception of what is essentially a matter of information, it was nevertheless feasible for a student expressing agreement with the racist position of 'Keep Britain White' or 'I wouldn't like a family of another colour to move next door' to give factually correct responses to information items (e.g. about the proportion of black people in Britain or about the existence of racism *per se* in Britain) and score 0 (i.e. non-racist tendency) on various information items. This led me to use far more explicit value statements over matters of information in the final 16-item version. However, I did not want to dispense with information statements altogether as misinformation helps create a racist frame of reference, even for a student whose conscious value statements tend towards non-racism. Hence the final survey contained 5 'information' items mixed in with 11 explicit value statements.

The trial also allowed experiment with scoring. Half of the papers required students to make their closed responses to statements along a numbered scale representing degrees of agreement or disagreement. Discussion with the trial students

afterwards suggested preference for the letter symbols (SA, A, U, D, SD) which were used in the final version.

Administration of the first survey, July 1988

The survey was administered to all second year students in the project school in July 1988. As I did not want to be identified as the researcher, the survey was largely conducted by a teacher colleague not associated with the school. The survey was completed in a day across seven classes, with the assistance of the out-going Head of English who administered it in his own class. He stressed the fact to the class that he would not himself have access to their papers.

The problem of ensuring confidentiality to all but the researcher was resolved by issuing separate name slips, each of which had a number corresponding to that on that student's questionnaire. The completed name slips were collected at the beginning of the session and placed in an envelope which was immediately sealed in front of the students. They were assured that only the researcher would have access to the slips as well as their papers and they were asked to answer the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It was explained that the identification system was necessary to enable the researcher to look for possible changes in individual responses over time if the survey was repeated.

In reporting the data in this thesis student anonymity has been preserved by the use of pseudonyms. All written quotations are accurate reproductions of the student's original wording and spelling. Responses from 177 students have been analysed, 30 of whom were in the project class.

TABLE 1 - PROJECT CLASS, 1ST SURVEY, JULY 1988

Scores by rank order and gender of students
on Racist Perceptions Scale

<u>Girls</u>		<u>Boys</u>	
Tanya	3	Carl	3
Marion	3		
Louise	4	Marco	4
Erica	4		
Angela	5	Simon	5
Caroline	5		
Hannah	6		
Alison	7	Andrew	7
Julia	7	Tony	7
Gaby	7	Neil	7
Jacky	8	Peter	8
		Donald	8
		Paul	8
		Philip	8
		Graham	9
Michelle	10	Dan	10
		Terry	10
		Michael	11
		Greg	12
		Justin	12
		Ian	16
		John	19

Girls' average: 5.8 (SD 2.0)

Boys' average : 9.1 (SD 3.8)

TABLE 2 - PROJECT CLASS AND UPPER, MIDDLE AND LOWER BAND
1ST SURVEY, JULY 1988

Average scores on Racist Perceptions Scale

		Av	SD	N
Project class	M	9.1	3.8	18
(middle band)	F	5.8	2.0	12
	M/F	7.8	3.6	30
Upper band	M	10.0	4.6	30
	F	5.2	1.9	30
	M/F	7.6	4.3	60
Middle band	M	8.4	3.1	47
including	F	6.4	2.7	34
project class	M/F	7.6	3.1	81
Middle band	M	7.9	2.5	29
excluding	F	6.8	3.0	22
project class	M/F	7.4	2.8	51
Lower band	M	10.6	4.1	22
	F	10.0	3.8	14
	M/F	10.4	4.0	36
Whole year group	M	9.4	4.0	99
including	F	6.6	3.2	78
project class	M/F	8.1	3.9	177
Whole year group	M	9.4	4.0	81
excluding	F	6.7	3.3	66
project class	M/F	8.2	4.0	147

Av = average score

SD = standard deviation

N = number of students

Responses to racist/non-racist statements on the Racist Perceptions Scale, July 1988

From Table 1 it can be seen that scores from the project class on the Racist Perceptions Scale ranged from 3 to 19 - the higher the score, the greater the degree of racism expressed. There is a clear gender pattern, with girls tending to score at the lower non-racist end. The maximum score for a girl was 10 (Michelle). Boys were represented across the range of scores, fewer however at the lower non-racist end, despite outnumbering girls by 3:2 in the class (18 boys, 12 girls). Girls scored on average 5.8 (Standard Deviation [SD] 2.0) compared with the boys' average of 9.1 (SD 3.8). While the girls' scores can be seen to cluster towards the lower non-racist end of the scale, the class average and the boys' average have been somewhat skewed by the high racism scores of the two highest-scoring male students. This is reflected in the greater standard deviation for the male average than for that of the girls.

This gender difference, with the male student average being notably higher than that of female students, was borne out across the year group (Table 2) and tallies with findings and observations of some others (Bagley & Verma, 1975: 238; Marsh, 1976:650; Williams, 1986:314; Gaine, 1987: 46; Cohen, 1987: 11). However, as in the project class, the male standard deviation is generally greater than that for female students, which suggests that there is a tendency towards skewed distribution amongst the boys with certain individuals expressing more extreme racist views than the general cluster. Although these extreme scores would raise the male average, they nevertheless do not provide a full explanation for the gender differential that seems to be evident here between the average male and female responses. Not all researchers have, however, found a relationship between racist attitudes and

gender distribution¹ but the results of this first survey indicated one potentially very interesting area of focus for the qualitative research to follow.

Results for the year group also suggested a 'banding' difference with students in the lower band classes showing evidence of more sympathy to racist views than in the middle and upper bands. A similar finding is noted in the Swann Report (1985: 234). This does not necessarily mean that upper and middle band students tended to be less racist than lower band students. It may be that they identified more closely with what they perceived to be the school's expectations and value system in contrast to lower band students who may possibly have been less concerned about expressing views which diverged from those perceived to be 'acceptable'. In other words upper and middle band students could conceivably have been more inclined, even unconsciously, to conform with 'right' responses.

As stated earlier, it was amongst my aims to tap responses which might otherwise not come to light in the classroom and to identify students in the project class who might provide a particular focus for the subsequent research. The survey was useful in both these respects, although obviously too limited for developing any detailed individual analysis. However the relative total scores for the different items were interesting in indicating perceptions, values and beliefs which appeared to be held in common and those over which there was more

¹ Mould (1986), for instance, in a predominantly white area of higher than average unemployment, detected no significant gender difference in her survey of 300 essays written by young white people about black people. While Bagley (1970a) found no major gender difference in prejudice in a survey of 2500 white people living in boroughs with higher than average numbers of black residents, he noted that slightly more of the very prejudiced tended to be male. These findings indicate the importance of looking at class as a factor in any detailed research investigating gender and attitudes to 'race'.

contention. On this basis it appeared there was fairly general consensus that:

Irish people are just as intelligent as English people.
(Total class response: 90% agree/non-racist, 10% undecided, 0% disagree/racist)

A black child born in Britain should have the same rights as a white child. (90% agree/non-racist, 7% undecided, 3% disagree/racist)

Black people in Britain have as much right to getting jobs as white people. (90% agree/non-racist, 7% undecided, 3% disagree/racist)

We need to do something in school about racist attitudes.
(87% agree/non-racist, 10% undecided, 3% disagree/racist)

There was also majority consensus against the following racist statements:

The slogan 'Keep Britain White' is really quite sensible.
(83% disagree/non-racist, 14% undecided, 3% agree/racist)

I wouldn't like a family of another colour to move next door. (83% disagree/non-racist, 10% undecided, 7% agree/racist)

It is interesting to note that while the statements concerned with general moral precepts about the rights of black people in Britain elicited a 90% non-racist response rate, this began to decrease for statements touching on issues of black immigration and, at a closer level, black neighbours. Only a few students rejected the myth that:

Immigration is making Britain overcrowded. (13% disagree/non-racist, 44% undecided, 43% agree/racist)

There was also contention over whether 'People who come to Britain should behave like the British'. 40% disagreed, which was interpreted for scoring purposes as non-racist; 43% were undecided; and 17% agreed, interpreted as racist. Although the hidden agenda behind this statement may commonly be that 'British' refers to a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant norm, we cannot be absolutely sure that this was how it was taken by all the respondents.

I have already referred to problems in interpreting responses to certain items and that they need to be viewed in context.

In retrospect it was apparent that the statement concerning the stereotype of West Indians and rhythm was not sufficiently well phrased to be a reliable discriminator. 10% of students disagreed that 'West Indians have a good sense of rhythm' which was scored as non-racist; 37% were undecided; and 53% agreed, which was scored as racist. Judging by individual response patterns, it is possible that some of those opting for 'undecided' did not want to make a negative judgement by saying 'no' while others may have been reluctant to make a generalisation either 'for' or 'against'. It is also worth noting that two of the three students with non-racist scores on this item scored very high (John) and medium high (Terry) on the scale as a whole. They had quite possibly interpreted the statement as referring to a positive quality in West Indians, hence their disagreement.

While a majority were willing to declare that racism existed and that they were opposed to it, considerably fewer were prepared to acknowledge that racist jokes (in which they most likely participated) were a vehicle for transmitting racist assumptions and stereotypes. Thus 77% of the class acknowledged that there was racism in the local area and 87% that racist attitudes needed to be tackled in school; yet only 43% disagreed that "Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun." Furthermore only 63% were prepared to take an outright position against the use of racist names by dissenting from the statement that "Words like paki, wog, chink, gippo are harmless really."

This significant apparent discrepancy in the project class between a very high level of agreement with the value statement about equal rights for black and white British children compared with considerable diversity of opinion on the harmfulness of racist jokes is broadly mirrored in responses from the rest of the year group (Table 3).

TABLE 3 - PROJECT CLASS AND REST OF YEAR GROUP
1ST SURVEY, JULY 1988

% total responses on selected items from
Racist Perceptions Scale

	NR	U	R
"A black child born in Britain should have the same rights as a white child"			
Project class	97%	3%	0%
Rest of year	96%	3%	1%
<hr/>			
"Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun"			
Project class	43%	27%	30%
Rest of year	49%	18%	33%
<hr/>			
"Words like paki, wog, chink, gippo are harmless really"			
Project class	63%	24%	13%
Rest of year	74%	14%	12%
<hr/>			
NR = non-racist	U = undecided	R = racist	

Racist jokes appeared to be slightly more acceptable among the project class students than amongst others of their age. The project students also appeared to be rather less concerned as a group than others about terms such as 'paki', 'wog' etc.

The students and how they depicted themselves

I did not include a question on parental occupations as I hoped to be given the relevant information regarding the project class from the school. Although this was requested in a form which would maintain individual anonymity I did not ultimately receive it. From informal assessment however, through conversations with staff and students, I gathered that parental occupations ranged from professional to skilled manual. The questionnaire also revealed that all but one of the thirty students had travelled abroad with their families or on school trips, eight of them having visited more than

three other countries. This suggests the relative affluence of the area.

Thirteen of the thirty had at least one parent born abroad and a further four had a grandparent from outside Britain. Information from this survey and other sources later in the year indicated that half the class were aware of having relatives living in other countries. Seven of the nine lowest scoring students on the Racist Perceptions Scale had relations in countries other than Britain. Ten students had at least one parent or grandparent from Ireland, one girl having been born in Dublin (Angela). Two had a parent from Spain (Julia, Dan). One boy with an Italian father had lived in Italy until he was eleven (Marco), and another whose mother was Italian expressed the wish to take out an Italian passport when he was older (Carl). Two boys had grandparents who had come to England from Poland at the time of the Second World War (Michael, John). Other parental birthplaces were Kenya, Trinidad, Sri Lanka and Germany (Peter, Caroline, Justin, Louise respectively, all of whom were in appearance white).

In response to "When I think of myself I think...", the features referred to included physical appearance (9 references), being "lucky" (7), relationships (6), family (5), personality (5), future prospects (3), intelligence (2) and nationality (1). Nine students made purely negative comments, thirteen made positive comments, five combined negative and positive features and three indicated uncertainty or worry. Interestingly, six of the nine making negative comments on themselves were amongst the lowest scorers on the Racist Perceptions Scale (scoring 3 to 8). Making a negative self-comment here should not necessarily be equated with low self-esteem, nor a positive comment with necessarily high self-esteem. What can be said, however, is that those making negative comments were prepared to be criticise themselves to some extent.

25% of the girls and 12% of the boys referred to physical appearance, the majority of references being negative e.g.

"I am fat and have loads of spots and my bad habit of biting my nails." (Marion)

"I need too lose ABIT of wait I can make people laugh by impressions Im fairly withit." (John)

The positive references to physique were all made by boys, but their responses were not always unidimensional e.g.

"That I haven't got as much intelligence as I would like to. I think to be a reasonable footballer, fairly strong and good humour." (Paul)

A number of students simply commented on being "lucky" e.g.

"that I am lucky to be me; to have a good mom and Dad" (Caroline)

Others were prepared to reveal more complexity in their relationships e.g.

"of someone who is intelligant, when I want to be, which is very often. I don't think much of myself, I think more of other people and what they are thinking of me. I think that I'm very cruel to some people." (Alison)

The only student to comment on nationality was the student with an Italian mother:

"I think of myself as disliked. But I am proud of being Italian and if I could I think I will change my passport." (Carl)

Information gained about the students' perception of themselves from this single stimulus is clearly limited and partial. However the main function of this item was to serve as an introduction to eliciting their images of various people.

Images of "English people"

Images in response to "When I think of English people I think..." ranged from negative features such as racism/ chauvinism, hooliganism/vandalism, wealth/greed contrasted with poverty, to positive features such as friendliness and wealth without any implied criticism. Positive references (26) slightly outweighed negative references (20). The vast majority of negative references (18 out of 20) were made by students with scores of 8 and below on the Racist Perceptions

Scale. The same range of students however also made nineteen positive references and a third of all the students formulated responses in a way that suggested a sense of normality and a desire for even-handedness, balancing 'good' and 'bad'. For instance a couple of low scoring students wrote:

"about my friends, who are all English, and how nice they are but I also think about the people in this country who reject me because I am Irish." (Angela)

"that they are very selfish, all of these upper-class people living in great big mantions when the poor people aren't living in anything at all. Most of the English are quite generous, just the odd-tight few!!" (Tanya)

The highest scoring student on the Racist Perceptions Scale, himself of Polish origin, wrote:

"most are alright but othes eg. punks ect. I think they make England look horrible." (John)

20% of the class referred to vandalism e.g.

"There are different kinds of English people there are vandalisers, hooligans, etc. and some people whom are just happy and don't do wrong things. I think English people should quieten down a little stop vandalising e.t.c." (Alison)

The two students of Italian origin both made comments relating to racism:

"Generally I think of English people as cold, racist, stiff and awful trouble makers abroad. In Italy people think of English persons as being football huligans etc." (Carl)

"they are chovernists (young people but the elderly are a pain." (Marco)

Images of "Irish people"

Anti-Irish sentiments were matched by a slightly larger number of references to positive features (22 positive references, 19 negative). Positive features included qualities such as being caring, friendly, brave and humorous e.g.

"I like irish people because are very caring and they can be brave by taking a load of stick from Northern Ireland. This does not really count for all Irish people." (Carl)

Negative features referred to the IRA/ violence, causing aggravation and being stupid e.g.

"of the IRA bombs and murders riots deaths killings."
(Andrew)

"that they are quite noisy and very modest. They treat most people quite nicely but they treat the english like a piece of dirt. They get on my nerves because they are so rude and cheeky." (Julia)

27% of respondents referred to anti-Irish jokes, some students acknowledging the effect of these jokes e.g.

"they are stupid, but I know a lot of them aren't, but I get that feeling because of the jokes we make up about them." (Paul)

30% of the students affirmed that Irish people were "normal", basically "the same" as themselves, a couple of students making statements which attempted to reflect an even-handed approach e.g.

"of normal people and of terrorists who wreck other lives just to get their point over to the government, they gain nothing from this but hate." (Jacky)

Six of the nine students with an Irish background acknowledged their connection, the Dublin-born student referring warmly to her roots:

"of my nanny and how much I miss her I think about how lucky I am to be Irish and I am never ashamed, and I know that my mum, dad, and sister will always be there."
(Angela)

It is interesting to note that the degree of anti-Irish sentiment expressed in the project school, which was Catholic, was markedly less than amongst the students on whom the survey was originally piloted in a maintained non-denominational school.

Images of "Asian people"

While there was a range of imagery relating to 'difference' in terms of food, language, religion, clothes and a few assumptions of exotic life-styles by students from low to high scorers on the Racist Perceptions Scale, 17% of the class made specific statements about Asians being "the same" or "equal". In a couple of cases the respondent spelt this out to refer to an underlying equality e.g.

"I think of how people are racist to them they are humans like anyone else, they have to share this world with us, its only their colour that makes them different" (Alison)

However it is difficult to know what to infer simply from the statement:

"they are the same as us" (Michelle)

Michelle, who was the highest scoring girl on the Racist Perceptions Scale, was probably expressing an assimilationist concept rather than the idea of equality. This interpretation is supported by her response to the subsequent item on West Indians (see below).

The following statement is also problematic:

"they should be treated the same way as the British are treated." (Andrew)

An underlying distinction is being suggested here between "they" (Asians) and "the British". However, as discussed earlier, my use in the survey of the terms "Asian" and "West Indian" in contrast to "English" was itself problematic.

20% of the class referred to racism against Asians, including the second highest scorer in an openly racist statement:

"of racist remarks and silly people with baskets on there heads." (Ian)

The student with the highest score on the Racist Perceptions Scale (himself, as mentioned previously, of Polish descent) commented that:

"they are trying to take over England" (John)

13% students referred to Asian wealth, while 20% of the group presented images of Asians as victims of poverty e.g.

"I think of the state they are in. little [few?] people work also the state of housing. Some don't even wash for a week, due to lack of clean water." (Tony)

Although one boy referred to "people struggling to get by and having a hard time from racist people" (Neil) , no one presented an image of resistance to racism. Only three students (10%) admitted to the limitations of their knowledge, one girl reflecting

"I don't know much about the Asian people so it would be wrong of me to judge them." (Tanya)

Images of "West Indians"

Again only 10% of students (all amongst the lowest scorers) acknowledged "I don't know any" or "I don't know much about them", one however admitting:

"I sometimes take the micky out of the way they speak. But I wouldn't mind them really (I don't know any West Indian people so I really don't know what they are like)." (Erica)

The majority however produced a range of images connected with tropical climate and sun, cricketers, starving people. There were also a few scrambled stereotypes of cowboys and ricefields. 13% of the students referred to West Indians being "the same as us". As in the item on Asians, a couple of students elaborated their responses to refer to fundamental equality:

"that they are just the same as us but people can't see through the colour of their skin they just see the dark colour and not the human being underneath." (Angela)

"I think the same towards West Indian people they are not different, except in colour but why do people be racist towards them?" (Alison)

It is not possible to deduce from these statements the extent to which these two students were prepared to accept diversity alongside equality. In the Racist Perceptions Scale, however, Alison disagreed with the statement "People who come to Britain should behave like the British", while Dublin-born Angela, who stated that she was "never ashamed to be Irish", remained undecided.

Michelle, quoted in the previous section as responding that Asians were "the same as us", gave a similar response in relation to West Indians:

"they are the same as us. but sometimes some of them smell of curry."

Apart from the distinct possibility that she has responded primarily to the word "Indians", her use of the concept "same" is questionable. The "but" suggests that people who "smell of curry" are not the same i.e. not assimilable. It is unlikely that being "the same" is being used here in the sense of being

equal. Michelle was the highest scoring girl on the Racist Perceptions Scale.

17% of the group referred in some way to West Indians experiencing racism, but with their own attitude to it not always apparent. It was also not always clear just whom the respondent had understood by "West Indians" e.g.

"of couboys and Indians, flats with loads of people in and racial discrimination." (Graham)

Images of "South Africa"

In response to the item "When I think of South Africa I think...", a third of the students referred directly to discrimination against black people, in the majority of cases referring also to white violence e.g.

"of the violence that the black people are suffering and I think of apartite and how wrong it is." (Angela)

"of the fight and how big-head the white people are there and that South Africa should be run by black South Africans because its their place but their living in the slums." (Marion)

Another third of the students wrote about poverty without linking it to discrimination. In other words it might well have been part of a generalised 'Africa image', one student writing:

"of Ethiopians - the starvations, the deaths, the hurtness, the illness, the lack of food and rest. No homes and no clothes." (Julia)

A few students seemed to have misread the opening statement, with responses along the lines "they are just the same as us" without specifying the identity of "they". It seems likely however that the reference was to black South Africans:

"they have as many rights as we do, they are just the same as us." (Hannah)

"It is just the same here there is no difference between us except in colour and in some cases religion." (Alison)

Alison is referring here to her question regarding West Indians, namely "...why do people be racist towards them?"

20% of the students condemned the South African situation, a couple revealing a sense of involvement as white people:

"about all the racism the ill-treated black people living in poverty, when white people live in big houses with swimming pools. They way they beat and set fire to the blacks, when it's there country, not ours. But white people moved in, took there jobs and houses." (Louise)

"I am ashamed to be white because blacks are put through so much when the only difference is their colour." (Carl)

This response of Carl's, one of the lowest scoring students on the Racist Perceptions Scale, needs to be contrasted with his outburst against Arabs in the following section.

Two of the students simply produced jungle/animal imagery.

Responses to "My experience of people of another colour from my own is..."

40% of the class used this open-ended sentence to assert some form of statements about equality. e.g.

"That they are no different from people who are white most of them are even born in England and I don't think there should be any barrier between them. As a lot of them were born in the country and people shouldn't think that they are from somewhere else." (Gaby)

"That really we are all the same. Just because someone is a different colour we think that we rule over there." (Tony)

"I think they should be treated the same way as the colour I am." (Simon)

However, in relation to South Africa, Simon (who had an uncle living there) wrote:

"of the partate. I see some good points and I see some bad points."

With one exception all those expressing the idea of equality were amongst those scoring in the lower half of the Racist Perceptions Scale.

A few students made reference to racism e.g.

"we are all human so why should we be racist at them?"
(Paul)

"Where I used to live my best friend used to be coloured,
and people where racist towards her." (Alison)

23% quoted friendships with someone of another colour and a few put forward the idea of everyone being the "same". Two students admitted limited knowledge while 17% expressed some form of negative feeling. These ranged from insecurity and fear to outright hostility:

"they are nice but I felt I was being looked down on."
(Donald)

"sometimes quite alarming because their faces look as if they wanted to kill us because of what we have done to their country." (Dan)

"some of them are all right but most act as if they belong here." (John)

"My only bad experience is arabs. I cannot stand them because they eat like pigs, smell like pigs and are when women are concerned, PIGS. They try to chat up my sister several time and they always stare." (Carl)

John was the highest scorer in the class on the Racist Perceptions Scale (19) but Carl was one of the lowest scorers (3). Sixteen months later, on re-administration of the survey, while John's score remained constant, Carl's increased significantly. I shall take up the question of apparent contradictions within individual students' responses later.

Data from the 'About Yourself' section

On examining data gathered from 'About Yourself' (Section D), I decided to use only the information concerning gender and age. I made the decision on seeing discrepancies in the responses of 20% of the project students. For example, some reported that they had no contact with someone of another colour, while answering that they had a good friend of another colour or had been to the home of someone of another colour. A couple of respondents also showed inconsistency between responses in this section and their completion of "My experience of people of another colour is..." The possible

confusion over terminology is indicated by the respondent who wrote in response to the latter item:

"two people in my class they aren't very coloured and the rest of the people in my class treat them the same as they would treat a white person." (Angela)

I could not be sure to whom Angela was referring, although possibly she meant two dark-haired boys who appeared slightly tanned - Marco from Italy and Dan, whose mother was Spanish. This points to the openness of interpretation of "someone of another colour". Thus when Angela responded in Section D that she had a good friend of another colour, it was open to question whether the friend came in her category of people who "aren't very coloured". Since I could not be sure that the students' interpretation of "another colour" was therefore consistent with what I had intended, I felt that the 'About Yourself' data were not sufficiently reliable to be of use apart from details of gender and age.

Comments by students on the questionnaire

Students were invited to comment on their feelings and thoughts while answering the questionnaire. While a few students either chose to make no comment or to answer in non-committal terms of how easy or difficult they had found it, 37% indicated that they felt it was good to have an opportunity to express their views, some making strong declarations against racism, e.g.

"I am totally against rasium which is what I think this paper is getting at. I think coloured people have just as much a right to come to English as we have to go to there country. I also agree with white and coloured people marring. I would like to marry a coloured person. I do think they have as much right as white people do." (Erica)

"I am against racism and I think this is what the paper is asking. As a catholic I think that all people were made in Gods image so no matter what their colour or creed they should all be treated with the same respect." (Angela)

"I think that the questions about thinking about different peopl are not all that good apart from the asian, and one about coloured people. The questions about coloured people on sheet 2 & 3 were good as they

expressed my feelings of how white people treat Black people as dirt and slaves to do all the harder and less payed jobs." (Gaby)

One low-scoring student expressed her awareness of the limitations of the questionnaire as an indicator of actual behaviour:

"I thought how some of the boy in my class are racist but just act it because they think they're acting big then write differently to how they act." (Marion)

A couple of students expressed a sense of uneasiness:

"They are quite good but why do we have to comment on another race, it is only to see if we're racist or not!" (Paul)

"I thought that the questions about colour and racism were unfair as on this sheet there could have been a time which your life could have changed your answers. Also some people think logically others quite freely and stupidly - so in a questionnaire like this one answers which are stupid and not logical might overrun the logical answers which means the wrong decisions might be taken." (Justin)

Justin - who responded to 63% of the racist/non-racist statements as 'undecided' - apparently felt deeply uneasy not only at being confronted with contradictions within his own frames of reference, but at the possibility of being judged. Others were less introspective, less aware of, or worried by contradictions within their thinking and feeling. For instance the most overt and vituperative racist comment - that already quoted about Arabs as "pigs" - was made by a boy with an over-all low score of 3. His comment on the questionnaire returned to his particular hostility:

"why was nothing about arabs entered as a question" (Carl)

The two highest scorers openly rejected the whole survey:

"Not very good to ask people what they feel on a undisputed subject why should we like an oposite person it's irelivent if I like them to somebody else." (Ian)

"I personnly think it was a waste of time because you cant really achieve anything from it accept know if we a racsist or have any coloured friends or not." (John)

Conclusions drawn from first survey

As stated earlier, the fundamental purpose of the survey was to provide supplementary data, of a broadly descriptive nature, for my main ethnographic study. I did not intend to place a primary emphasis on the quantitative data from the Racist Perceptions Survey as one might for a controlled experiment.

Given my initial aims, the first survey was useful in a number of ways. At an individual level it indicated the students within the project class who were to provide a particularly useful focus for my attention. It also helped me delineate potentially significant features both within the project class and across the year group of thirteen to fourteen year-olds as a whole:

- the gender difference with girls tending on the whole to express rather less racist views than boys;
- the apparent discrepancy in a marked number of students between stated value positions against racism (such as asserting equal rights for black and white British children) and behaviour perceived as acceptable (such as racist joking and name-calling);
- apparent contradictions within an individual set of responses suggesting the potential complexity within an individual's frame of reference - as in the case of Carl who obtained one of the lowest non-racism scores while nevertheless expressing a virulent hatred of Arabs;
- widespread ignorance about black people, judging from the sentence-completion responses;
- a notable lack of reference to the socio-historical realities of people's lives.

Although not at all unexpected, the students' apparent level of ignorance about various people and limited awareness of historical and social realities were striking. Even the few references to racism against Asians and West Indians were extremely generalised, suggesting little real knowledge. It could however be argued that the formulation of the opening statements in terms of "When I think of 'x' people..." directed respondents towards offering personalised snap-shots rather than any more historically or socially based information. A statement such as "When I think of West Indian history..." might possibly have produced a different set of answers, if not a complete blank! In response to "When I think of South Africa..." (i.e. a response to the country as opposed to the people), students did appear slightly more informed, one third of them offering images of white discrimination which attempted to reflect something of the socio-political situation. At least a couple of students also mentioned the land having been taken away from black people. It is no doubt not surprising, but I think nevertheless significant, that the students offered no images of slavery or colonialism in relation to West Indians or Asians. Nor was there any reference to the British colonial connection with Ireland in relation to the Irish, nor the Catholic struggle for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland, despite almost a third of the students acknowledging an Irish connection. There were only generalised images of violence, with no mention even of the Protestant-Catholic division.

One might well argue that given the age of the respondents (13/14 years old), a lack of socio-historical knowledge was to be expected. I was therefore particularly interested to see if there would be any noticeable change in data from the second survey, when the students would be in their fourth year of secondary schooling. Yet whatever the reasons, if the students were indeed not used to thinking about the socio-historical dimension of people's lives, this would have implications for the project's literature course. Although the students would

have already experienced literature within the "personal growth" approach to English teaching (with an emphasis on the individual's linguistic, imaginative and aesthetic development), it seemed likely that the course would be their first introduction to a "cultural analysis" view which "emphasises the role of English in helping children towards a critical understanding of the world and cultural environment in which they live". (DES, 1989)

I have already mentioned various limitations regarding construction and interpretation of data from the survey, for example concerning terminology used and items which proved to be unreliable discriminators. An overall factor which defied monitoring was the extent to which students did indeed answer honestly, rather than - consciously or subconsciously - giving what they believed to be an 'appropriate' response. I have already raised the query whether the higher average score for lower band students (male and female) on the Racist Perceptions Scale, could possibly have reflected variation in the degree to which students from different bands may have felt susceptible to giving the 'right' response. An unknown factor which may have applied to some students, was also the level of reading-comprehension required to make sense of all the items on the Racist Perceptions Scale. Although most of the wording was straightforward, three items were phrased in the negative and it is possible that this caused problems for some students. In retrospect I realised it would have been more sensible, for instance, to rephrase the item "Television shouldn't show films where black people are made to look like savages" to "It is wrong for television to show films where black people are made to look like savages".

Other limitations inevitably included uncontrollable variables relating to personal psychologies (e.g. how individual students were feeling on the day of the survey) as well as the current social, political events which may have given rise to

particular feelings and attitudes developing prominence at that particular time.

Despite these various limitations, and the fact that I could not expect to draw any definitive conclusions on the basis of this relatively small number of students, the first survey served my purposes adequately.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SECOND SURVEY, NOVEMBER 1989

Re-administration of the survey

The survey in its original format was re-administered to the whole of the year group, including the project class, in November 1989, four months after the end of the course. The students were by then in the fourth year and fourteen to fifteen years old. I deliberately avoided re-administration at the end of their third year as I felt responses from the project students might be affected by immediate feelings aroused by the course and it would be wise to allow time for such feelings to settle. I had hoped to organise the second survey earlier in the autumn term in an attempt to confine extraneous factors, however circumstances at the school made this impossible. There had been extensive reorganisation of class groupings within the fourth year, in addition to which students were following different options. In order to cover all the students it was necessary to run the survey during English classes over two days using two administrators. As before, I did not wish students to connect the survey with the project and it was necessary to seek assistance from two colleagues from outside the school, one of whom had been involved previously. Neither was asked by the students whether the survey was connected with the project.

The students were again assured that only the researcher would have access to their identities by matching the number on each paper with a corresponding name sheet. The reorganisation of classes meant that individual papers had to be re-sorted into the previous groupings. All papers from students who had not been present for both surveys were excluded to ensure the sample was consistent. The total of 177 students was arrived at as a result of this procedure (out of a potential 208 students in the year group). All the project class students were present on both occasions. A comparison of average scores across the year group, in July 1988 and November 1989, appears

TABLE 4 - PROJECT CLASS AND UPPER, MIDDLE AND LOWER BAND
1ST AND 2ND SURVEYS, JULY 1988 AND NOVEMBER 1989

		<u>July 1988</u>			<u>November 1989</u>		
		Av	SD	N	Av	SD	+/-
Project class (middle band)	M	9.1	3.8	18	9.9	5.1	+ .8
	F	5.8	2.0	12	4.5	1.8	-1.3
	M/F	7.8	3.6	30	7.8	5.0	-
Upper band	M	10.0	4.6	30	12.0	6.0	+2.0
	F	5.2	1.9	30	5.7	2.4	+ .5
	M/F	7.6	4.3	60	8.8	5.6	+1.2
Middle band including project class	M	8.4	3.1	47	9.9	5.2	+1.5
	F	6.4	2.7	34	6.9	3.9	+ .5
	M/F	7.6	3.1	81	8.6	4.9	+1.0
Middle band excluding project class	M	7.9	2.5	29	9.9	5.3	+2.0
	F	6.8	3.0	22	8.2	4.2	+1.4
	M/F	7.4	2.8	51	9.2	4.9	+1.8
Lower band	M	10.6	4.1	22	10.5	5.0	- .1
	F	10.0	3.8	14	8.2	3.8	-1.8
	M/F	10.4	4.0	36	9.6	4.7	- .8
Whole year including project class	M	9.4	4.0	99	10.7	5.5	+1.3
	F	6.6	3.2	78	6.7	3.5	+ .1
	M/F	8.1	3.9	177	8.9	5.1	+ .8
Whole year excluding project class	M	9.4	4.0	81	10.8	5.6	+1.4
	F	6.7	3.3	66	7.1	3.6	+ .4
	M/F	8.2	4.0	147	9.1	5.1	+ .9

Av = average score

SD = standard deviation

N = number of students

+/- = average increase/ decrease at November 1989

in Table 4 and the detail of responses of the project class students to individual items on the Racist Perceptions Scale in Appendix 3.1.

Overview of results across the year on the Racist Perceptions Scale, November 1989

From Table 4 it can be seen that, across the year group, scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale of students who had not been involved in the project increased on average by 0.9, with an average increase of 1.4 for males and 0.4 for females. For middle band students excluding the project class, the combined average increase was 1.8, with an average increase of 2.0 for males and 1.4 for females. This compares with no increase in the combined average for the project class (also middle band), representing an increase of 0.8 for males and a decrease of 1.3 for females.

These broad figures therefore suggest that while there may have been movement towards some increase in racist perceptions across the year group - with the average increase for boys being slightly more marked than that for girls - this may have been somewhat modified in the project class. While the average score for the project boys had increased, this was not as great as the increase in average scores either for boys in the rest of the year or in the middle band. The average score for the project girls had actually decreased in contrast to a slight rise for the girls in the rest of the year and to a more marked rise for the girls in the rest of the middle band.

The year group averages mask an interesting difference between an average increase for both male and female students in the upper and middle bands, excluding the project class, and an average decrease for lower band students. The average score for male lower band students decreased by 0.1 and for female students by 1.8. Nevertheless the combined lower band average at 9.6 still remained higher (as on the first survey) than the combined male/female average scores for other bands. The lower

band female average was reduced to the same average score for middle band students excluding the project class (8.2), but was still notably higher than the average score for girls in the upper band (5.7) and project class (4.5). The male lower band average at 10.5 remained higher than all other male averages excepting that for male upper band students, which at 12.0 was the highest average score across the year group.

It is necessary however to interpret these figures with caution in the light of varying standard deviations. In the second survey the male standard deviation was consistently higher than that for females. The widest standard deviation was in fact for upper band male students, indicating that the particularly high average of 12.0 was caused by a skewed distribution with certain individuals taking extreme positions. Detailed examination of the pattern of scoring amongst upper band male students reveals that eight out of thirty male students obtained scores of 17 and above (out of a potential maximum of 32).

It is interesting to note that one of these students, with a score of 23, had been promoted to the upper band at the end of his second year, having originally been in the same class as the project students. (For analytical purposes, however, I have included him as being within the upper band for both surveys.) He had been a close friend of Ian, the project student with the second highest Racist Perceptions score on the first survey (16) - a score which increased to 23 on re-administration. The following examples from this upper band student's second paper give an idea of the deep-seated nature of his nationalism and racism:

"When I think of English people I think of an established and historique nation. One who owned the biggest empire and won wars."

"When I think of Asian people I think of people not satisfied with their lot. They are immigrants."

"When I think of West Indians I think of good cricketers but again immigrants who take British jobs."

"My experience of people of another colour is very little. However, the media, present these people, in my mind, as parasites."

"This questionnaire stirred up a frightening hatred against immigrants. Although it allowed me to understand my own views."

Standard deviations were consistently higher on the second survey for male averages than for females. This indicates that the pattern of skewed distribution with individual male students scoring notably higher than the general cluster was repeated across the year group. The lowest standard deviation amongst all the female averages was for girls in the project class (1.8). This was the only group amongst whom it appeared consensus may have actually strengthened since the first survey - bearing in mind, however, that the standard deviation amongst the project girls on the first survey was already one of the lowest.

Taking the standard deviations into account, it thus appears that the average increase observed in male and female average scores could be attributed to the expression of increased racism (in some cases quite sharp) by a limited number of individual students rather than an across the board slight increase amongst the majority. An examination of both sets of scores for all individual students in July 1988 and November 1989 suggests that this was indeed the case. The scores of thirteen students in the year group i.e. 7% of all students (11 male, 2 female) increased by 7 or more points to 17 or more (the maximum increase for an individual being 16 points). On the other hand only four students i.e. 2% of all students (2 male, 2 female) decreased their scores by 7 or more to register within the lower non-racist end of the scale at 5 or below. In other words, there was a greater tendency to increase to a high level of explicit racism rather than to decrease to a low level. Across the year group however, the general average increase on the Racist Perceptions Scale, as well as the average decrease amongst girls in the lower band

and project class, obviously also mask individual fluctuations in either direction.

An interesting difference which bears some comment is the 1.8 decrease amongst lower band girls, with the standard deviation for both the first and second survey averages remaining the same (3.8). In discussion about the higher average racism scores of lower band students on the first survey, I offered a possible explanation in terms of lower band students perhaps feeling less constrained, however unconsciously, to provide the 'right' responses. How can one then explain this decrease in the average female lower band score and the fact that the lower band male average did not increase as that of upper and middle band students? Could it be that as the students grew older, some of them - girls in the lower band in particular - were beginning to become a little more aware of the implications of some of the statements; while certain upper and middle band individuals, particularly males, were beginning now to 'flex their muscles' with age, feeling less constrained to offer responses considered 'appropriate'? Of course, there may also be other explanations, including the possibility that the variations were random.

The first survey led me to consider certain features as potentially significant: gender differences; discrepancies between stated value positions and views on actual behaviour perceived as acceptable; contradictions within individual sets of responses; widespread ignorance; lack of reference to the socio-historical realities of people's lives. These often overlapping features continued to be prominent within the second survey.

Gender difference

As can be seen from the results discussed above, across the year group the gender difference noted on the first survey - with girls tending on average to express less racist views than boys - appeared not only to persist but to widen. The

change in average scores on Table 4 shows a smaller increase for females than for male scores, with an actual average decrease for girls in the lower band and the project class. It has already been noted that the standard deviation for female averages is lower than for those of males i.e. suggesting that there is generally less extreme variation amongst female students, with fewer girls expressing highly racist views. It is also possible that girls were rather more concerned with providing 'appropriate' and morally acceptable responses than boys.

Discrepancies and Contradictions

As stated previously, any interpretation of results on the Racist Perceptions Scale has to be extremely tentative. It also needs to be remembered that many students show evidence of considerable contradictions within their frames of reference - a feature likely to be perpetuated into and through adult life. Often the contradiction lies between a general moral belief or value and the way the individual wants life to be around her or him e.g.

"I think everyone should have a right to live because how would we feel if we were a different colour. But I don't think I would like a family of a different colour living next door because I always think of a big coloured woman and dirty children." (Female middle band student, Score 7; 1st survey score 9)

Examination of scoring patterns on the items about equality as a value and those on the acceptability of racist jokes and names, for instance, indicates persistence of the marked differences portrayed across the year group in Table 3. While very few students explicitly reject equality for black and white people in Britain, there remains contention about the practice.

Some students while referring to racism in negative terms, nevertheless reveal through their language that their own perceptions are still shaped by racist concepts. The following three statements were made by one student:

"When I think of English people there are a lot of attitude improvements to be made. There is too much racism..."

"When I think of Asians I think they are the people who where turbans. They seem to do well in business. I think they are tight with money and have a stupid religion."

"When I think of South Africa I think alot of changes should be made, whites should have no rights in the country. It should be given back to black people."

(Male middle band student, Score 4; 1st survey score 11)

This student while agreeing with the moral statements about equality for black and white people in Britain, remained undecided on both surveys about whether "People who come to Britain should behave like the British." It appears from his comments that his notion of equality is not one based on an acceptance of difference but probably contains an agenda of assimilation. His statement on South Africa also seems to suggest that he does not see the possibility of black and white people collaborating in a just society. Is the assumption here rather that each should call the tune in 'their own' country. The following comments from another student suggest a very similar pattern of thought:

re. English people: "Not very hospitable and often keeping everything to themselves."

re. Asian people: "People who have emigrated to England thinking it was a better place than their own but they don't change their customs, etc which annoys me."

re. West Indian people: "People who keep coming to England not changing their religion. I feel they should stay in India and don't belong here."

re. South Africa: "Of violence towards blacks. I feel that the whites should move out of Africa as they dont belong there."

(Male middle band student, Score 8; 1st survey score 5)

Comments across the year group suggest that there were a significant number of students, apart from these two, whose idea of equality was probably one based on assimilation rather than on an acceptance of diversity. In Table 5, the total percentage of responses to the item "People who come to Britain should behave like the British", reveals a

considerable degree of contention. In the second survey only 40% of the year group excluding the project class categorically rejected the statement with its unquestioning assumption about "the British". It is interesting however that the percentage taking the non-racist position had increased since the first survey - more markedly so amongst the project class. It should be noted that between the two surveys there had been much news coverage from February 1989 of Muslim fundamentalist reaction to Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses (1988) and from June 1989 of possible immigration from Hong Kong. However no respondent referred specifically to either of these and it was not possible to gauge how these events may have affected perceptions.

TABLE 5 - PROJECT CLASS AND REST OF YEAR GROUP
1ST AND 2ND SURVEYS, JULY 1988 AND NOVEMBER 1989
% total responses on selected items from
Racist Perceptions Scale

	<u>July 1988</u>			<u>November 1989</u>		
	NR	U	R	NR	U	R
"People who come to Britain should behave like the British"						
Project class	40%	43%	17%	53%	37%	10%
Rest of year	32%	31%	37%	40%	25%	35%
"Immigration is making Britain overcrowded"						
Project class	13%	44%	43%	50%	27%	23%
Rest of year	27%	35%	38%	22%	35%	43%
NR = non-racist U = undecided R = racist						

Ignorance and Ignoring

The student last quoted was by no means isolated in his belief that 'West Indians' come from India. He was also part of the vast majority in his assumption that there are "People who keep coming to England", i.e. immigrants. The reality is that in only eleven out of forty-five years since the end of World War II has annual immigration exceeded emigration (Institute of Race Relations, 1968; Kohler, 1976; Central Statistical Office, 1976-1990), with immigration in the last five years being mainly from Europe and the United States; and that only 4.5% of the U.K.'s population is black (Gordon, 1989). Yet the total percentage responses to the statement "Immigration is making Britain overcrowded", shown in Table 5, reveal widespread ignorance. The project students received some specific input into this area and whereas only 13% of them before the project had rejected the statement, 50% rejected it afterwards. However amongst the rest of the year group the percentage of fourth year students taking the informed, non-racist position declined - from 27% to 22%. There were female as well as male students who were explicit about their responses to people they perceived as "immigrants" and whose feelings reveal far deeper roots than can be explained by 'ignorance' in the passive sense of simply lacking knowledge. In these students there is an active element of ignoring - an active sense of not wanting to know 'the other'. One of the girls with the highest female score across the year group on the Racist Perceptions Scale (19) wrote:

re. Asians: "I wish their was'nt so many of them in our cities. Birmingham. I lose heart when I see more Asians than white English walking down the street in Manchester or any other city."

re. West Indians: "harmless I get annoyed (not very much) when I see people wearing saris. It might help the society if foreigners - Indians Asians or people from any country to do as we do. speak dress etc."

(Female middle band student, score 19; 1st survey score 7)

Regarding South Africa however, she wrote:

"I'm not racist so it does not bother me what colour people are."

On the Racist Perceptions Scale this student did not want a family of another colour next door, was undecided both about 'Keep Britain White' and about equality for black and white children born in Britain. However while agreeing with the assertion that there was no racism locally, she also agreed with the statement that "We need to do something in school about racist attitudes."

Looking at individual patterns of scoring in students across the year group both in the second and fourth year, one is constantly faced with apparent contradictions in the perceptual framework of respondents. It is indeed the existence of these contradictions that provides room for shifts in perception to occur and it was intended that the project incorporate a methodology which would give the students space to reflect on possible contradictions.

Lack of socio-historical knowledge

In relation to the first survey I commented that it was not unexpected to find amongst the project students a very limited awareness of the historical and social realities of people's lives, especially of people formerly colonised. Features such as passive and active ignorance amongst white Britons, notions of equality based on assimilation rather than acceptance of difference, tolerance of racist jokes and other discriminatory behaviour have their roots in an imperial past in which the humanity of the subjugated had to be denied.

Given the argument that the students' general lack of socio-historical awareness could be attributed largely to their youth - an argument advanced by senior management within the school - I was particularly interested in whether there would be any noticeable change once the students were in their fourth year. For some this was the penultimate year of schooling.

However in the second survey the statement "When I think of 'x' people..." continued to elicit a mixture of personal snap-shots, or in a few cases admissions of ignorance, rather than thoughts about people in relation to their social history. Only one of all 177 students referred directly to the experience of colonial domination. It is interesting that this student - with an Irish father and Scottish mother - perceived himself primarily in terms of his own values and the implications for his social and political outlook:

"When I think of myself I think of being a socialist who is not swerved by any racial, religious, sexual or ethnic discrimination. I think of myself as someone who cares for the environment because we have no car and my family and I spend time on conservation projects. I feel greatly for the problems of the people and that is why I am a socialist."

(Male upper band student, score 3; 1st survey score 6)

I shall quote extensively from this student's responses to convey how he has placed a number of the more common 'snap-shot' type images into his understanding of the socio-historical, political context:

re. English: "a people who are strong - not always commendable - and a people who are really just a part of all civilised democracies in the world. I mean that they realise democracy and they want more of it, and that they usually strive for democracy elsewhere. Not CIA democracy, however. there are always the exceptions and England has bigots and sexists just like anywhere else."

re. Irish: "a people who have been persecuted by us over the centuries, by Elizabeth I, Cromwell etc. The problems of today are mainly to blame on the age old intervention into Ireland's affairs by England. This does not excuse the terrible atrocities of the IRA, however, Irish people are virtually the same as nearly all nations in that they have nice and nasty people; and the joke about their thickness is intolerable. What about Joyce, Shaw, O'Brien, O'Casey etc."

re. Asians: "A race which has, quite rightfully, turned the tables on us. At the time of the glorious empire, Britain went around conquering as much as they could, not really caring what happened to the indigenous populations. People who think they should go home should think again. They have every right to come here, especially because we just happen to be passing by their nation when we conquered them."

re. West Indians: "There is no difference, except colour and creed, that separates a white man/woman from a black man/woman. The West Indians are just as important as any white civilisation. We should all learn to live in co-existence."

re. South Africa: "a country that has problems, stemming once again from so called Western civilisation's greed. If the native tribes had been left on their own everything would have been fine. It is the problem in Ireland as well."

re. experience of people of another colour: "Well, because our town doesn't really have many coloureds, I have not had an experience that I can remember. I have seen the odd few, maybe passing along the street, but I don't stop to talk to them."

There has been considerable development in this student's level of theoretical thinking since the first survey when many of his responses were not qualitatively different from those of other students broadly expressing sentiments of equality. It is this combination of a strong sense of values, combined with social and historical knowledge, that makes his ability to theorise a powerful tool. I suspect this student not only comes from a family sharing his values, but one which has also given him access to the sort of detailed knowledge he has about Ireland - and in which it is a normal part of life to discuss social and political developments. Even putting this speculation aside, a family culture in which there is no car and members spend time on conservation projects is not the norm. I would venture that coming from what appears to be a close family actively practising values which run counter to the dominant culture, is a significant feature in this student's ability to look critically at the society and its history more generally.

For the majority of students, however, home is a place where the dominant culture - and perceptions propagated in a predominantly-white community - go unquestioned. Although through Catholicism there may be broad acceptance of the idea of equality in the sense of being 'all God's children' or 'equal in God's eyes', it is not generally part of the dominant culture to question the nature of equality, nor to

see it as a central principle against which all social relationships need to be measured.

To develop not only a critical sensitivity to injustice, but also an active response, to racism in particular, will involve students in personal challenges. An example of the kind of challenge was provided by one of the four (non-project) students previously mentioned whose score significantly decreased between surveys to the lower end of the Racist Perceptions Scale, although she continued to think in both stereotyped and misinformed ways e.g.

re. Asians: "of the funny clothes"

re. West Indians: "of the red spots they have on their forehead and there long brown hair"

(Female lower band student, score 2; 1st survey score 10)

Nevertheless a comment by this student on the second survey suggests that she was in the process of some critical rethinking:

"It (the questionnaire) made me really think about the attitude problem there is here. It made me think that my nan is doing wrong things saying that 'the blacks are harmless as long as they are in there own country'. I don't really talk to black/coloured people and I started to ask myself why don't I talk to them. The reason for that is that I don't know hardly any..."

I think it significant that this student focused on talking to black people and her lack of opportunity for this. The voice is a most powerful conductor of meaning, and where we are denied the voices of others we are also denied access to meanings they make in the world. Genuine equality, not of the assimilationist variety, requires people to be open to the voices of others.

Students in the project class were given access to a range of new voices - many of them black - containing, amongst many other things, indictments of injustice, inequality and racism. In examining their responses to the second survey I was concerned to see whether there would be any indication of the experience of these voices.

TABLE 6 - PROJECT CLASS, 2ND SURVEY, NOVEMBER 1989
Scores by rank order and gender
of students on Racist Perceptions Scale

<u>Girls</u>		<u>Boys</u>	
Alison	2 (7)*		
Tanya	3 (3)		
Marion	3 (3)		
Louise	3 (4)		
Angela	4 (4)	Neil	4 (7)
Erica	4 (4)	Peter	4 (8)
Julia	4 (7)		
Caroline	5 (5)		
Gaby	6 (7)	Andrew	6 (7)
Jacky	6 (8)	Tony	6 (7)
		Paul	6 (8)
		Graham	6 (9)
Hannah	7 (6)	Marco	7 (4)
		Dan	7 (10)
Michelle	8 (10)	Simon	8 (5)
		Donald	10 (8)
		Greg	10 (12)
		Justin	10 (12)
		Philip	11 (8)
		Michael	11 (11)
		Carl	13 (3)
		Terry	18 (10)
		John	19 (19)
		Ian	23 (16)

* Figures in brackets above show scores on first survey

Girls' average: 4.5 (SD 1.8)

Boys' average : 9.9 (SD 5.1)

Profile of the project class on the Racist Perceptions Scale,
November 1989

Turning from the broader context to the project class, the range of scores amongst these students was extended from 3-19 in the first survey to 2-23 in the second survey. Once again a clear gender pattern emerged, as can be seen in Table 6, with most of the girls scoring at the lower non-racist end of the scale. The average female score (4.5) with a relatively small standard deviation (1.8) can be regarded as a fairly reliable indicator of the average position for girls in the class, showing a small decrease (-1.3) since the previous survey.

One of the most encouraging responses was that from Alison whose overall score decreased by 5 points. There was a notable change in the way she dealt with the open-ended sentences. On this second survey she went beyond asserting her belief in the fundamental equality of all people, but confidently questioned that she should be even asked to make generalisations about the characteristics and behaviour of whole groups of people:

re. 'West Indians have a good sense of rhythm': "I circled undecided because I thought it was a stupid question. Most people whether West Indian or not have a good sense of rhythm."

re. 'People who come to Britain should behave like the British.': "What are the British meant to behave like?" ('undecided' selected)

Her final comment also revealed the close combination of cognitive and affective elements in her responses:

"The questionnaire was very good, some of the questions asked I felt were a bit stupid like the ones I've just mentioned and some I was quite angry at. Because I've had a coloured friend for a long time I have a very strong point of view, especially about apartheid, and other things that separate us from other colours."

On the first survey Alison had written that:

"where I used to live my best friend used to be coloured, and people were racist towards her."

Although in the first survey there was already evidence of a 'felt' response and a real concern (re. West Indians: "...but why do people be racist towards them?"), this had been

considerably strengthened sixteen months later. Although one could not prove that this was a direct result of the project, it certainly seems likely that the course gave Alison space to explore and deepen her responses to a range of experiences to which she felt she could relate. She used the reading journal far more extensively and intensely than any other student, developing it into a diary of personal discourse about the books and experiences. In addition it was probably information and discussion during the course which accounted for the change in her responses to three items on the Racist Perceptions Scale from '2' to the non-racist '0'. These were regarding jokes, the difficulty of black people getting houses and immigration. It is interesting that although taking the non-racist 'disagree' position on the scale about jokes, she nevertheless added a comment that "Some jokes are a bit of fun others aren't". From her responses to the second survey, it is not possible to assess whether, and how, her understanding of the socio-historical context of racism had developed. For example, after the course, could she have begun to answer the question she had herself asked on the first survey relating to West Indians "...but why do people be racist towards them?"

A girl presenting a very different profile from Alison's was Michelle. In the first survey Michelle scored 10, and was the highest-scoring girl on the Racist Perceptions Scale in both surveys. In the second survey her score was reduced to 8 and she appears to have modified her responses to some items on the scale (e.g. moving from the racist position to one of 'undecided' on the issue of jokes, 'Keep Britain White', a black family next door, and immigrants having to behave like the 'British'). However she also showed a reaction towards a more racist response on other items (e.g. moving from a position of acceptance of intermarriage to 'undecided', and from agreement to disagreement about the need to address racist attitudes in school). There was also a notable change in her sentence-completion responses, for example her thoughts

about English people becoming explicitly exclusive, implying that to be English one needs to be "pale":

"it is good we can all be together" (1st survey)

"they have a pale skin" (2nd survey)

On the second survey her responses to Irish and Asian people appeared to become more distanced and stereotyped:

re.the Irish: "it is sad that there are two parts in religion, and that the i.r.a. has to blow up the catholics. I have a Irish friend she's quite nice."
(1st survey)

"they have a funny accent, and live on farms in small houses." (2nd survey)

re. Asians: "they are the same as us" (1st survey)

"they wear weird clothes and live away from this area, but I don't really think about them most of the time, cos I don't know any." (2nd survey)

Asked for her thoughts about West Indians, a defensive, irritated reaction can be detected in the second survey:

"they are the same as us. but sometimes some of them smell of curry." (1st survey)

"I don't think about West Indians, because I don't know any. why should I think about them anyway?" (2nd survey)

Her statement on experience of people of another colour in the second survey suggests very strongly an assimilationist concept of "the same". It appears that colour is not 'noticed' as it would be a barrier:

"I have some coloured friends. They are the same as us."
(1st survey)

"..when Millie Murry and a few other coloured people came in the third year. They were really nice, and I didn't notice they were another colour, they were funny and exciting. I like them, and wish they could come back."
(2nd survey)

Michelle's comments about the first and second surveys are strikingly different:

"I think it was fun. It was good and I would lik to do it again." (1st survey)

"We all-ways get questionares on racism, sometimes it annoys me. What I want to know is, that when white people go to a coloured country, do they get racist remarks from the blacks. I did ask a coloured lady this once, and she didn't give me a straight answer. I remembered the things

we did last year about racism, which was really good. I learnt things that the whites did to the blacks which were horrible, but I would've like to have learnt the other side, like whether the coloured people ever treated the whites this way." (2nd survey)

It would appear that over the project year Michelle had not only become sensitized to issues of 'race', but that she had also developed in ambivalence. On the one hand her comment that "the things we did last year about racism" were "really good" sounds genuine, yet at the same time she felt annoyed and defensive, as if she was being 'got at'. It appears she desired a sense of balance and suspected there was "the other side" of the story which was being withheld i.e. that black people were also racist towards white people. Michelle was not alone in expressing this feeling during student evaluation of the project and it has significant implications for work in this area with young people. It raises questions about how to create frameworks which are sufficiently supportive to enable white students to handle challenges which they may well perceive as threatening to their identity. It also raises questions about levels of conceptual thought. Michelle's concept of racism, along with that of the vast majority, remained firmly rooted and bound at the concrete level of personal attitude. She made an interesting comment to me during an evaluation session, recalling that a year previously she had been asked to write about West Indian people in a questionnaire. Although she did not know any, she had nevertheless written that they smelt of curry. When I asked her how she now viewed that response, she said she felt she had been "really racist" but had not understood that at the time. The ambivalence of someone like Michelle reinforces the importance of the context in which prejudice reduction work takes place and how young people are supported in handling guilt feelings that are likely to arise. Are they simply left to cope with such feelings in isolation?

The male average (9.9) had again been somewhat skewed by the high racism scores of a few individuals. While Ian and John

retained their position as the most explicit supporters of racist perceptions, the most striking feature is not only the increase in Ian's score to a new extreme but the notable rise in the racism scores of Carl and Terry. Their combined increases largely account for the overall average increase of male scores compared with the first survey (+ 0.8). While Ian and Terry had been at high and mid-high positions on the Racist Perceptions Scale, Carl had previously scored at the lower non-racist end. There had, however, already been an apparent anomaly in his frame of reference with his virulent statements against Arabs. But I suspect a major factor in his significant increase in explicit racism was an anti-authority reaction against what he had come to perceive as a set of values being promoted by the school. Throughout the year he made his unwillingness to conform to 'school standards' quite apparent. It is probable that Terry's increased racism score had the same roots, although there was also a personal element which it was not possible to explore. He had an Algerian step-father and there was some uncertainty whether his step-father was still living with his mother. Over the year Terry became involved in considerable trouble, culminating in suspension at the end of the summer term. There was however a qualitative difference between the increase in racism scores of Terry and Carl. At the beginning of the project Terry already held a range of explicitly racist views. He presented himself as 'one of the lads', basically not bothered about thinking about issues and indifferent to discussion. Carl, on the other hand, almost despite his 'this is boring' body language, frequently became engaged in discussion. From his perspective as a partial outsider (perceiving himself to be "disliked" and with his desire to take out an Italian passport when he turned eighteen) he frequently showed considerable insight into the mechanism of power in human relationships. He completed his survey with an enigmatic comment:

"Some of the answers I was unsure about because I wasn't really aware of the appropriate answers."

Interestingly, Terry ended his survey also with a comment relating to how his responses would be received:

"I thought like "ok what shall i write Shall I lie or shall I tell the truth will I get done and thing like that"

These statements contrast with those of both John and Ian who had begun and ended with the highest racism scores in the class. There is a feeling of these two students having thoroughly dug in their heels. The tone is that of truculence and resentment:

"I think that Black and brown people should be given out to see what they think and I'm sure alot would be racist towards whites although they are living in what started a white country." (John)

"I thought it was a boring and it just wastes class time. I can't see what the point of a survey like this is. do you hate blacks. so you need proof to get them all extradited out of the country. Thats what it looks like to me." (Ian)

These results relate closely to crucial questions about the school and classroom context (including the role of the teacher) in which an attempt is made to address issues of racism. As indicated earlier in my overview, the teaching style of the project teacher Alan Parsons was essentially teacher-centred and didactic. The results reinforce my view that the context is as important as the content when undertaking education relating to justice and equality. A pre-condition for enabling students to open up honestly, both to themselves and to others, is a context of genuine mutual trust and collaboration. A classroom in which the teacher maintains centralised control through traditional mechanisms of power, prestige and competition cannot provide the basis for that. (Richardson, 1980, Epstein & Sealey, 1990)

How the students depicted themselves on the second survey

Sixteen months older, more of the project students responded with increased positive self-imagery. Some seemed to have grown in confidence to express and deal with critical feelings about themselves e.g.

"...I think of a person who wants to have a good personality and needs to be more self confident and not as shy although I am beginning not to be." (Gaby)

It is of course difficult to generalise about personal statements. Those made by the four students with the highest racist scores are of interest. Carl, who had moved from a low to a high score, continued to assert in a matter-of-fact way his difference:

"Im different from a lot of people I know."

On the other hand, it is difficult to know whether Terry actually believed the 'persona' he presented, or whether his response here is not an indication that he was approaching the questionnaire 'in role':

"I am the only one of myself nobody can match my abilities or skills"

Ian's response seemed designed to fend off any personal enquiry and gave evidence of his well developed propensity for 'suitable' replies:

"I don't think of myself, think of others before yourself."

In contrast, John engaged in no subterfuge:

"I have to lose weight I think of myself being alright and sometimes that Im lucky. Proud to be English."

On the first survey, apart from Carl, no student had mentioned nationality. On this second survey, nationality or colour became an aspect of self-reference for five students (17%), including John. Dublin-born Angela, who previously had responded in terms of being "better towards other people" and co-operating more within her family, was now asserting her Irish identity:

"I will never really belong in this country I always have the urge to return home."

Simon, who was second generation Irish, had previously represented himself purely in terms of his worry about "not going to go through life with a good job". (In the second year he had been in the lower band and was not aware at the time of the first survey that he was to be promoted to the middle band.) Sixteen months later he depicted himself as easy going,

with a defensive qualification that he didn't accept racism, despite enjoying and telling racist jokes. Having Irish family and telling anti-Irish jokes was legitimate:

"I am very easy going/ can except anything not racist yet I do laugh at racist jockes Even though I have Irish family it doesn't stop me telling Irish jokes."

Simon's score had actually increased on the Racist Perceptions Scale from 5 to 8, one of the significant features being a change from rejection to acceptance of racist jokes. I suspect that he had accepted racist jokes all along, but simply felt more confident to articulate this by the time of the second survey. The issue was aired during the project, a number of students explicitly defending racist jokes as being "just a bit of fun". This proved difficult to shift given how firmly rooted their concept of racism was at the level of personal attitude and their lack of socio-historical understanding.

Two other students showed a marked shift in the level and direction of response to the question about themselves. Marion and Tony's very personal, concrete replies on the first survey shifted to statements with much wider implications in the second:

"I am fat and have loads of spots and my bad habit of bitting my nails" (Marion, 1st survey)

"I have a large family that are a mixture of nationalities." (Marion, 2nd survey)

"that what I'm doing is it good or is it bad. I think of my looks and worry about simple things." (Tony, 1st survey)

"that I work quite well. Get along with most people. I don't mind what colour they are." (Tony, 2nd survey)

Although it would again not be possible to state categorically that the students' increased consciousness of nationality and colour in relation to self was the direct result of work on the project, it seems quite probable that there is some relationship. Scanning responses to this item across the year group reveals only 10 students in the rest of the year group (7%) who made this kind of reference. These statements also ranged from assertion of a particular identity (being English

or not English) to self-definition by two students in terms of bonds with other people across barriers of 'race'. One of the latter was the highly articulate student quoted previously who defined himself as "a socialist not swerved by any racial, religious, sexual or ethnic discrimination".

One implication of this heightening of self-awareness and identity in the project class is that there is a need for students to have the space to address questions of identity openly.

Images of "English people"

Most of the images elicited in the first survey were reproduced in various forms in the second survey. The most notable difference however was an extension to the range, with the inclusion of five references to a variety of people and cultures, one strong statement against stereotyping of "the English" or any other group, and four references to skin colour. Three of the latter were exclusive:

"they have pale skin" (Michelle)

"pale, blond, clever, patriotic" (Dan)

"white, fellow people" (John)

The fourth reference to skin colour involved qualification:

"mainly white people but I know that it is a mixed population of all cultures. I have no resentment towards any of the people." (Hannah)

Dublin-born Angela's response to this item was again significantly different from the previous survey, reflecting her increasing sense of non-English identity:

"about my friends, who are all English, and how nice they are but I also think about the people in this country who reject me because I am Irish." (1st survey)

"(I think) of them as foringers because of my nationality. I also think that they are ignorant in the true sense of the word when it comes to recognizing other cultures." (2nd survey)

Awareness of diversity within an English identity was not limited to the project class as across the year group there were a handful of students who referred to this in terms which could be interpreted as positive. One of these non-project students provided an interesting example, however, of the complexity of frames of reference. In relation to English people he wrote:

"of a culturally mixed society, in which many ethnic minoritys are picked on and abused because they are supposedly 'stealing' our jobs and houses."

(Upper band student, Score 14; 1st survey score 17)

His score appears surprisingly high, given the above statement. His final comment was revealing:

"I felt in my mind under peer pressure in a way because it is, despite modern reforms, socially acceptable to be racist to some degree..."

Images of "Irish people"

As with those of English people there was some extension in the range of images offered by the project students, including a few references to the countryside, intelligence and one reference to drink. The number of references to positive features such as being caring, warm and friendly were balanced by approximately the same number mentioning violence and fighting. Only one student referred directly to discrimination, but did not appear to see any links with anti-Irish jokes:

"...I don't think they should be descriminated in the way they are. Even though I laugh a bit at some of the jokes."

Only four of the students referred on this occasion to their own Irish connections (compared with six on the first survey) but there appears to be no particular significance in this slight reduction. Angela again made a strong statement:

"(I think) of home and how friendly they are always ready to help. I don't think they are stupid at all."

Her sense of Irish identity was not however quite as unproblematic as her various statements might suggest. Her accent was southern British standard and presumably she could

have passed for English, although she was open about having been born in Ireland. On one occasion however I witnessed her become engaged in an under-cover racist joking session led by Ian - the chief racist joker of the class - in which she provided the anti-Irish joke for the group.¹

Ian was the only project student to express direct personal antagonism towards the Irish. Whereas in the first survey he referred simply to "Irish jokes", he wrote on the second survey:

"Their backwards I hate their accent and i know somebody who is just so annoying."

Images of "Asians"

The slightly increased range of images included a couple of references to restrictions on women and four references to corner shops. There appeared to be no significant variation in the number of references to concepts such as Asians being fundamentally "the same" despite skin colour differences, or to the existence of racism. Three students revealed overtly racist personal responses including Ian whose racist perceptions on the first survey were replaced by explicit hostility:

"(I think) of racialist remarks and silly people with baskets on there heads." (1st survey)

"Look at that black ----- I just hate Asians so much." (2nd survey)

One student articulated the difference between what he perceived and what he actually 'knew':

"...I tend to think that they're less advanced than we are, Even though I know that they are not. I think of the hard time they get from non-coloured (whites). (Justin)

Images of "West Indians"

None of the students directly referred to any knowledge about the Caribbean offered to them during the course e.g. through

¹ This took place during a drama class - on the theme of intolerance!

drama activity on slavery and work with Millie Murray or James Berry. However cricket continued to figure as a significant image (27% of students) and four students (13%) produced stereotypes of 'Indians' e.g.

"People in turbans and funny skirts smoking a friendship pipe, poverty."

Five students (17%), all scoring towards the non-racist end of the Racist Perceptions Scale, made statements affirming belief in equal treatment. Ian did not express the same antagonism accorded Asians but commented:

"their better than the English at cricket".

Only Terry admitted to explicit racist feelings, remarking that he thought of them in the same way as of Asians:

"(I think) of them as people who me and my friend take the micky out of."

Images of "South Africa"

The proportion of students referring directly to discrimination against black South Africans in the second survey rose from a third to almost two thirds. The prospect of a rebel English cricket tour had brought South Africa back into the news and it seems likely that the students' interest had been raised by their having focused on South Africa for half a term during the project. As in the previous survey 20% of the students openly condemned the situation while the language of 37% revealed some sense of involvement:

"I feel sorry for the blacks who can't go around without I.D. They can't live amongst the blacks. They can't get proper well paid jobs even if they are very clever which most of them are. But I HATE THE WHITE PEOPLE OVER THEIR BECAUSE THEY MAKE THE RULES AND ALWAYS TREAT THEM AS IF THEY ARE NOTHING. BUT THERE NOT." (Peter)

"(I think) of the tremendous way they put up with apartheid. They're very brave people and I feel alot for them. shooting them is completely the wrong way of dealing with demonstrations as the police do this."
(Paul)

Although no student referred to the situation or characters in the book they had read Waiting for the Rain, a couple of students did refer to the course:

"...We saw a lot of films and videos, last year, in English and Drama, about races and different cultures. I learnt a lot from this." (Tanya)

"...We also did alot of work on racism last year and this helped me relise to what degree it goes on, even childrens books "ened Bliton" - the Golywogs. This is disgusting." (Jacky)

Responses to "My experience of people of another colour from my own is..."

The statements covered a similar range as on the first survey, from assertions of equality, references to racism and friendships to three statements indicating some negative feeling e.g.:

"not sure whether to trust them." (John)

"The only group I hate is Asians they just seem to get on my nerves. Other coloured people I don't hold any predjudice towards at all." (Ian)

Two students (Terry and Dan) referred to black friends or acquaintances who were "a good laugh", a phrase suggestive of a hidden agenda in which being "a good laugh" permits assimilation. Three students referred to the course, including Michelle with a statement already quoted about not noticing the colour of visitors, whom she found "funny and exciting".

Comments about survey

The percentage of students making explicitly positive and negative comments about the survey remained roughly the same as on the first survey. 50% of the class made positive statements, mainly in terms of it giving them space to express their personal feelings or it being a vehicle for addressing problems of racism. 13% of students were negative, making defensive statements, e.g. those quoted earlier about black people being racist towards whites (with the implication that too much fuss was being made of white racism). Three students (10%) referred to the project course, two of them expressing the view that they had gained in knowledge e.g.:

"I think that last time I didn't have much Education on people of different Races but in the 3rd year the whole time was spent in English on this subject. I understand

more now but still have the same sort of views. I probably believe more strongly in them. I think that something has to be done about Racism. It is a problem and coloured people shouldn't be treated different to White people if they were born in this country. It isn't fair. It isn't just people of a different colour, it's people who have a different accent or come from another country. It's not fair to treat them badly because we don't like the way they talk. What have they ever done to us?" (Caroline, 2nd survey)

Caroline had become far more assertive about the need to do something about racism than she was on the first survey although it may be more that her confidence had increased with age rather than a result of the course:

"I think that this questionnaire is a good idea to see what other childrens attitudes are to Children that are a Different colour from themselves." (Caroline, 1st survey)

Caroline's second response, as with those of other students scoring at the lower end of the Racist Perceptions Scale, reveals the amount of work which still needs to be done from an anti-racist perspective, despite her genuine plea for fairness. Fundamental racist perceptions (e.g. that there are 'different races') are established at an early age and deconstruction may be extremely difficult, perhaps demanding levels of abstract thinking beyond the present capability of the learners. Other concepts (e.g. 'coloured people' linked to the concept of 'colour') may be so entrenched as habits of speech and thought, that they are difficult to shift without very active self-motivation.

Conclusions drawn from the second survey

If the project class is viewed only in relation to its own quantifiable results on the first and second surveys, the gains towards non-racism amongst some of the students could be regarded as offset to some degree by the increase in explicit racism amongst others. For instance the decrease of 1.3 on the average score for girls on the Racist Perceptions Scale was offset by an increase of .8 in the average score for boys. However a different picture emerges when the results are



viewed in the context of the whole year group. It is also important to remember the limitations of this kind of quantifiable data and that they were intended to serve a supplementary function in an essentially ethnographic study.

Given the average increase in scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale amongst other middle and upper band students, the results of the project class appear in fact to indicate a small movement in the desired direction. The .8 average increase amongst the project's male students is not as great as that for the rest of the middle and upper band boys, while the 1.3 average decrease amongst the project's female students compares favourably with the average increase for the rest of the middle and upper band girls. On this basis one might tentatively suggest the course provided some form of deterrent or buffer against a general trend towards an average increase in explicit racism. It should be noted however that the lower band non-project students, in particular the girls, also decreased in their average scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale, although these still remained higher than for those of the project class - markedly so in the case of the girls.

Standard deviations increased across the year on the second survey, with the exception of those for girls in the lower band and in the project class. This suggests that a number of individual students, in particular males, were expressing more explicit racism than sixteen months previously and that the average score increases may well be largely attributed to some rather sharp increases in the scores of certain individuals. This pattern could also be seen amongst a small number of male students in the project class. The only average standard deviation actually to decrease was that for the project class girls. The project girls ended with not only the lowest average score of all groups of students across the year on the Racist Perceptions Scale, but also the lowest standard deviation. In other words, they gave evidence of the greatest degree of consensus.

These results indicate an interesting gender difference and indeed gender was also one of the key features of the ethnographic study. Banding also appears to have some relation to the results which would be worth further investigation. This would need to include looking at the students' socio-economic backgrounds, attitudes to school, identification with school ethos and objectives, as well as the particular classroom contexts for students in different bands. Questions arose during the project study about some of the effects of banding and the context of a fundamentally competitive, judgemental framework in relation to work on issues of social justice.

Concerns of this nature about the school and classroom contexts, including the framework of teaching and learning styles within which anti-racist work is undertaken, relate to the hidden curriculum within a school. The hidden curriculum must be seen as an important variable affecting responses on both surveys, as were the wider cultural, socio-political and economic contexts operating from beyond the school. For instance, on both surveys across the year group there was apparent discrepancy between very high levels of agreement with certain value statements referring to equal rights compared with much less agreement about the harmfulness of actual behaviour such as racist name-calling and joking. In the absence of specific investigation, one can only speculate on how this might relate to discrepancies between a school's philosophical statements about equality and justice compared with a hidden curriculum in which these values might actually be contradicted or ignored.

The existence of such apparent discrepancies (between theory and practice as it were) is an important feature in the frame of reference of either an individual student or a school. While most of us are capable of remaining seemingly at ease with a complex range of contradictory assumptions, perceptions, beliefs and values, the existence of these

contradictions nevertheless also provides a basis for shifts in perception to occur as the result of internal reflection and re-examination. The key question is how to create not only the impetus for that reflection, but the space in which this can happen where people do not simply retrench into closed positions because they feel their self-identity under threat. It is particularly relevant for education about issues of social justice to consider how to enable people to become involved in the process of changing themselves. Much of the ethnographic study was concerned with looking for evidence about the project students' frames of reference relating to 'race' and degrees of fluidity or fixedness when for instance assumptions, values or beliefs were challenged. Clearly the two surveys were able only to sample limited aspects of these very complex phenomena concerning attitude change.

Nevertheless the survey data do indicate something of the depth of the problems to be faced in this area. Apart from explicit hostility in a minority of students, there was continued evidence of widespread ignorance and ignoring of black experience, providing a basis for a range of racist perceptions not necessarily linked to direct personal animus. Even with students showing strong feelings against racism, it seemed unlikely that for most of them their concept extended much beyond the personal level. Notwithstanding the 'set' induced by the sentence-completion tasks, it does seem of note that only one out of the 177 fourteen to fifteen year-old students on the second survey indeed referred to the concept of colonialism - and he was not from the project class. Yet without a socio-historic perspective people are ill-equipped to develop a real understanding of racism and how it might be addressed.

Given that it was hoped the project course would encourage some kind of contextual understanding of racism amongst the students, it is worth bearing in mind Treacher's (1984/5) use

of Wright's autobiographical Black Boy with a class (see Ch.1: 37) and her warning about

"...the dilemmas of assigning a multidimensional role to one work of literature. Whilst being concerned to allow for its own impact through the power of the writing, there was the expectation that it would provide the key to understanding the history and psychology of racism. But historical and sociological explanations often shifted the emphasis from the narrative where, observably, the book's meanings were most accessible." (Treacher, 1984/5: 24)

For Treacher - apart from the invidious position in which she felt she had placed her black students who saw themselves framed as having 'problems' - the attempt "to fulfil a complete Humanities programme... in the space of one English project" resulted in issues of 'race' becoming thoroughly scattered. My own project suffered from the same constraint of being work in isolation. However, its focus was somewhat different from Treacher's. Not only were all the students white but, while I felt the texts could indeed provide some understanding of "the history and psychology of racism", a major focus remained on the students' responses to the narratives and how their frames of reference enabled, or disabled, them from connecting with the author's perceptions and meanings.

Thus while the survey data remain fairly crude and the project clearly limited in its scope to effect change, I hope the ethnographic data that follow will nevertheless provide the kind of richness of detail about processes of response which might be of use to English teachers in developing ways to challenge racism.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY AND CONTEXT OF STUDY IN RELATION TO SCHOOL, TEACHER AND CLASSROOM

The project in relation to the school

The preparatory stage - September 1987 to August 1988

As indicated previously, the county in which I undertook my research was predominantly white and the County Council's Education Sub-Committee had twice rejected proposals submitted by LEA Advisers to obtain government Education Support Grant funding for projects relating to multicultural education - on the grounds of 'no problem here'. Nevertheless I circulated my research proposal (submitted to the University in September 1987) to people I hoped would be interested within the LEA. The English Adviser, Senior Adviser and Chief Adviser all offered to explore avenues of support. This finally led to my being offered a .6 part-time Curriculum Support post under the aegis of the English Adviser, of which one day per week was specifically allocated to the project. My brief included furthering similar work in other schools. The post gave access to important facilities such as photocopying as well as County funding for essential equipment, for example the tape-recorders and tapes.

The support of the Senior and English Advisers was a significant factor in the project being accepted by a local school, both Advisers subsequently becoming members of the project's Steering Group. It was through the Senior Adviser that I was directed towards a Catholic Comprehensive, St Benedict's, where a small number of staff were involved in a World Studies course and where the Head and Senior Teacher were due to attend a Department of Education and Science sponsored Multicultural 20-day course. The attitude of the school's energetic Head of English, Paul Brennan, confirmed for me that the school could offer a fruitful context for the project. Paul, who had worked for four years in Angola for the United Nations, had only been in the school for a couple of years, but was highly regarded both by the Advisers and

members of the school's senior management as a force for change. Senior staff were in the process of redrafting a document on the school's aims and objectives. The draft papers being circulated for consultation included strong statements about basic ethical issues e.g.

"We exclude as totally unacceptable racism or any other form of social division. We not only teach the demands of justice, but we also try to put them into practice in our own community."

"The spirit of freedom which characterises this community condemns prejudice, welcomes diversity, encourages genuine choice and nurtures the growth of the individual."

"We strive to create a living community where people from different ethnic, social and family backgrounds are educated, and educate each other..."

As mentioned earlier (Chapter 2: 45) there was significant European diversity amongst the student population, although only about half-a-dozen students out of 1200 were black. The school had been undergoing a period of considerable change given that until six years previously it had been a boys-only independent school which had amalgamated with a convent girls' school at the time of becoming comprehensive. A number of the staff remained from the pre-comprehensive era.

A few informal meetings with the Head of English (in both our homes over dinner) were followed by a formal meeting at the school where I put forward my proposal to the Headteacher (Brother Michael) and the Chair of Governors. In accepting the project, both men expressed a sense of firm moral commitment. Brother Michael stated that he would welcome any queries from parents as a chance to explain what the school was about. The Chair of Governors re-affirmed this position as well as Brother Michael's hope that the project should network out into the school, helping to act as a catalyst in introducing multicultural issues.

With senior management having given the green light, I was asked to address the English Department. Although an English graduate, a writer, and editor of a G.C.S.E. anthology for English students, the major part of my twenty-year teaching career had been concerned with children with reading difficulties. It was clearly necessary for me to convince the department of the validity of the project in terms of their specialism. My diary for 12 January 1988 records entering the room "to slight haze of smoke - some cynicism perhaps or just four o'clock 'I'd rather go home' blues? Eight male teachers present, until late arrival of two women teachers from the lower school site. Three other women teachers were absent." However, minutes of the meeting (taken by the Head of English) record that "a vigorous and enjoyable discussion" took place after I had presented my rationale and proposed methodology. My notes record one teacher asking what children actually "take away with them from the classroom back into their own lives" after studying To Kill A Mockingbird. The same male teacher also expressed the fear that this project could be "something just 'done' in the third year, then left in limbo". There was some discussion of anti-Irish racism with one of the women speaking movingly of her own father's experiences in the locality and how a fundamentally gentle man had become deeply embittered. She felt it related to what I had said "about the need to understand the rage expressed by black people." This same teacher had asked a class of second years to list people they felt society excluded, and had been taken aback by the students' matter-of-fact use of terms like 'pakis', 'chinks', 'wogs' in the same way they used terms like 'drug addicts' and 'alcoholics'. The Senior Teacher (Gerald Carey), who was to accompany Brother Michael on the DES Multicultural course, also attended this meeting, raising the issue of the sole black child in an otherwise all white class. He spoke very frankly of how he was beginning to be conscious of underlying racist attitudes and how they could be embedded in the curriculum. Paul Brennan ended the meeting with an open invitation for anyone who so wished to participate in future

discussions on planning the project. By this stage he had told me he was applying for deputy headships and that there was a possibility he would no longer be at St Benedict's to be the project teacher himself. Although it was a role he should like to take on if he were still at the school, he nevertheless felt the opportunity should also be offered to others in the department. The most likely alternative teacher was apparently the Head of Drama, Alan Parsons, whom I had already met informally through Paul.

A couple of months later in March 1988, a half-day meeting was organised bringing together eight members of staff attending the World Studies and Multicultural courses, including the Head and Senior Teacher, the Heads of English, History and Drama. The feeling of this meeting was very positive in terms of people's willingness to raise a critical range of issues - gender and class, as well as racism. While members of the English Department and Gerald Carey, the Senior Teacher, tended to focus on pedagogy and the need for "affirmative, experiential learning" (Paul), the Head of History spoke about not reducing the issues to personal relationships and empathy, but of taking account of socio-political perspectives. He also raised the question of banding reinforcing class discrimination. Brother Michael's conclusion was that there was need for a curriculum group on multicultural and gender issues, the Head of History furthermore suggesting that in-service time could be spent on meeting each week to chart developments.

In retrospect it is possible to see how much these meetings and their agendas were the work of the Head of English and it is a matter for speculation what further developments might have taken place had he been present during the year of the project itself. The school's commitment in this preparatory stage of the project was characterised for me by a sense of anticipation and openness to change generated largely by Paul Brennan's personal energy and commitment. Apart from the

formal meetings to establish the project at an official level and to lay the ground for networking with other members of staff, Paul also continued to help set up throughout the spring and summer terms a number of informal meetings (over dinner at either of our homes) involving various other members of the English department as well.

The classroom stage - September 1988 to July 1989

With Paul Brennan's promotion to a deputy headship in another authority in September 1988, the Head of English post was temporarily filled in the autumn term by the second in department, Pamela Jones, and then for the following two terms by Alan Parsons who had become the project teacher. Although a couple of English teachers occasionally and briefly enquired about developments with the project class, I was invited (by Alan) to only one English departmental meeting to discuss the work. Even then, the time allocated was very restricted, allowing little time to delve into any of the issues in any depth. Throughout the project year, September 1988 - July 1989, there was a sense of great pressure of work within the department, providing the kind of climate in which questions about combatting racism are 'legitimately' marginalised. Without the particular enthusiasm and commitment of the outgoing Head of English, the mobilisation of members of staff came to a halt and other concerns appeared to be prioritised. No member of staff present at the meeting for World Studies/Multicultural course staff asked for the group to be reconvened, including the Head of History who had spoken about regular in-service discussions. Nor was there any move to set up a curriculum group on multicultural issues. The school's major structures were hierarchical and departmental, although it was in the process of setting up a faculty structure, not without resistance from some staff. From the perspective of an outsider the staffroom communicated a sense of individual enclaves with little real cross-curricular activity in evidence.

Apart from being asked to run a short workshop for a few staff on cultural diversity, of just over an hour on an in-service day (scheduled to run concurrently with a workshop on gender equality!), I was asked to address two school meetings - one for Heads of Year (March 1989) and the other for Heads of Departments (June 1989). In both cases discussion was limited following my input. This was particularly noticeable in the Heads of Department meeting. Perhaps this was partly due to general weariness by June, but I had hoped discussion would arise out of the diagrams I presented on the range of potential cross-curricular links relating to the novels Friedrich and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (Appendices 4.1, 4.2). One positive comment however was made during the pastoral Heads of Year meeting from a teacher in the History department, to the effect that it was a missed opportunity for the students in the project class not to have been introduced in History to the rise of fascism when they were reading literature set in that period. As things stood, the topic was hardly covered in their syllabus. The general feeling of the meeting was that different subject areas are linked in to pre-set syllabuses and in practice it would be too difficult to get co-ordination. At this stage the National Curriculum requirement for the development of cross-curricular themes and dimensions had not been published. Significantly, a Senior Teacher who in the course of the year was allocated the school brief for multicultural education (although she had not attended the DES course) asked no questions in the meeting where she was present and indeed never approached me throughout the year to enquire about the project.

Three meetings were however held of the project's Steering Group at which there was more detailed discussion (March, June, September 1989). The Steering Group comprised the Head, Senior Teacher Gerald Carey and project teacher Alan Parsons from the school, the Senior Adviser and English Adviser from the LEA, various outside consultants from black community organisations, the regional Arts Association and the

University, as well as myself as researcher. The major question asked by those from outside the school concerned how the school hoped to network ideas about combatting racism into the rest of the school and continue similar work after completion of the project. The view of the Headteacher and the Senior Teacher was that the issues would have to be introduced to the staff "very carefully". If it was seen as a "top-down exercise", there would be immediate resistance. It seemed that they had been relying very largely on their former Head of English to spark interest and concern. However with Paul Brennan's departure, there appeared to be no other real strategy for dissemination. There was talk of time being allocated on an in-service day, but it was far ahead and isolated. My feeling was that the philosophy of individual freedom, in terms of which the project had been accepted, offered welcome space for individual innovation, but did not provide the structures necessary for facilitating and promoting change. There was an over-reliance on individual charisma. This is not to decry the genuine sincerity of the Head and Senior Teacher, both of whom remained extremely supportive. In addition, despite a heavy timetable the latter, Gerald Carey, gave practical support by taking the project class for a series of Religious Education lessons directly concerned with racism. Individual commitment is undoubtedly crucial but individuals cannot solve social questions in isolation.

Furthermore under the philosophy of individual freedom, contradictions appeared to flourish unresolved, without challenge. For instance the contradiction of having a strong statement in the school aims about excluding racism as "totally unacceptable", while feeling that the issues would have to be broached "very carefully" with staff. Clearly at a ground-level context, in practice as opposed to rhetoric, discussion about racism was seen as 'sensitive' territory. I sensed this for myself within the staffroom and, given the locality, it would have been unusual not to have found

teachers who revealed a selection of racist perceptions generally current within the wider society. Extreme examples were rare and I heard of them at second hand. For instance, in the term leading up to the project, a couple of teachers in the lower school had launched an open verbal attack on Paul Brennan that he was engaging in indoctrination of pupils and that if Enoch Powell had had his way, there would not be any problem now! One of the same teachers subsequently confronted the visitor administering the first survey, prior to the project, with tales about the disaster of "mixed marriages". In the upper school staffroom, the idiosyncrasies of one particular teacher, which were generally humoured, included on a couple of occasions relaying racist jokes. It occurred to me that while I was not within the immediate circle he was addressing, I may have been deliberately part of his intended audience, but as is often the case, the circumstances were lined with ambiguity. My own response was not to participate openly but to observe, containing my silent disgust. In retrospect, I question whether I should not have attempted to play a more proactive anti-racist role within the staffroom rather than allowing my researcher-observer role to predominate.

Other examples, possibly at the level of unconscious racist perception, included a science teacher who while debating certain issues of 'race' with me and revealing disparagement of students in general, referred to inner-city classes he had previously taught as "liquorice all-sorts". On another occasion the English teacher Pamela told me how she had introduced the 'multicultural bookbox' to her students as being about "children from other countries". When I asked whether a number of the books were not set in England, her response was rather defensive - that the pupils would not have noticed a small point like that. Pamela also expressed her reluctance to use a novel like Rosa Guy's The Friends (set in Harlem, and increasingly popular as a class text)', because as an English teacher her responsibility was to teach pupils to

write in standard English with 'proper' sentence structure. She did not feel Guy provided an appropriate model. Again I was aware of a certain defensiveness in her relation to me and the sort of discussions in which I would have liked to engage were kept at bay. Her argument "You're not an English teacher so you don't have the same responsibility" was a mechanism for distancing the issues. Interestingly, Paul Brennan had presented a paper to a County meeting of Heads of English the previous year on the theme of wider reading and the need to offer students a much more diversified and richer experience of language and literature than offered traditionally under 'English literature'.

A further example of deep-seated, probably unconscious, racist perceptions arose in my discussion with the project class's previous English teacher, on the work they had done in the second year. Stimulated by the World Studies course she had been attending, she and the children had traced their "mongrel ancestry" (her terminology) and the origins of words before the students were asked to write an essay called 'The Newcomer'. It had to be from the perspective of a child asked by a teacher to take care of a new pupil from "an Eastern country". Their brief was to find out about differences for instance in clothes, customs, religion and language. The teacher appeared unaware of the Eurocentric bias of the work and indeed of the racism within some of the finished work. My diary records some of the detail:

20 July: ...My eye was drawn to a couple of very racist illustrations - a comic 'savage' with bone through nose representing Togo and a green frog with a beret representing France. Another showed a black sad figure and a white smiling figure separated by a globe with the title "These two people are worlds apart because of skin colour"... The essays were written from a position of patronage, largely stilted and focusing on differences with superficial endings about friendship - because that was surely required?

The work had been displayed in a public area of the school and was a clear example of the dangers of teachers undertaking 'multicultural' work without an awareness of racism. My

frustration was that there was no forum where such issues could actually be discussed and opened out. Pressured coffee breaks with snatched conversations did not provide that. During the preparatory stage of the project while Paul Brennan had been at the school, both he and I had organised a number of informal occasions to meet and talk over a meal. Pamela had come to a couple of these, but with Paul's departure it was as if the English department largely closed in on itself, with some reversion perhaps to what it had been before his arrival. I felt a strong sense that the project was territorially contained within the confines of Alan Parsons' classroom, and that although there was some interest, it remained simply at that rather remote level. For instance, there was no system for incorporating the resource materials I specifically developed in relation to the texts (including taped personal interviews with a couple of authors) into a common resource bank. Indeed from my outsider perspective, the sense of separate subject departments following their own particular courses was mirrored within the English department itself, with a sense of individuals each largely doing 'their own thing', although no doubt there were examples of collaboration of which I was not aware.

However, the English department contained teachers who I felt, had circumstances been different, would have been able to play a positive role in addressing issues of racism. For instance, the library teacher welcomed suggestions about books to be ordered for the library. In my first meeting with the English department, it was he who had raised the question about the real effect beyond the classroom of teaching certain books, as well as expressing concern about the work of the project being left in limbo once completed. Nevertheless much of the time he appeared under pressure from his sixth form work. Another teacher, Elly Williams, was new to St Benedict's, and in addition to adjusting to a new environment was undertaking the RSA (Royal Society of Arts) Drama Course, which was a heavy commitment. She was happy about collaboration and invited me

in to see a third-year class using the technique of hotseating characters from Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Her 'process rather than product' orientation provided an interesting and useful contrast with that of the project teacher. I subsequently discussed various drama ideas and issues with her and in the final term she conducted two drama sessions with the project students.

Over the year however, my general impression, gathered through conversations with Alan, was that there were under-currents and tensions within the department. It seemed that he saw himself and Pamela as the long-term stalwarts who had kept the department basically "on the rails" despite the various changes in the past few years of departmental Head. I am aware that this is a very subjective view, reflecting my limited perspective from the margins, but that in itself is perhaps significant given Paul Brennan's original vision of grounding the project within the framework of the English department as a whole.

The project teacher and his classroom

In devising the project it was necessary to be flexible. Ideally I should have chosen to work with a teacher with whom I shared similar ways of thinking about racism and how it operates, as well as similar ways of thinking about education. We should then have been able to collaborate on the basis of a shared frame of reference, reflecting back to each other our perceptions as the project progressed. With room for reflexivity we could have hoped to maximise the opportunities for students not only to explore racism but to find it challenged for themselves. However the chance of finding someone with whom I shared that degree of common ground was fairly limited, and from the beginning I said I was willing to work with anyone who was prepared to take on the project knowing my agenda. I felt that would at least create sufficient basis for collaboration. Furthermore the methodology I proposed for reader-response work was

essentially collaborative and non-authoritarian, enabling students to explore and share their responses rather than being directed what to think. I imagined my major focus could thus remain largely trained on the students and their individual and group interactions with the texts and other inputs. I envisaged that as a result of a developing collaboration between the teacher and myself in sharing our own responses to the planned texts and issues raised, the teacher would be able to take on the role of creating challenges for the students - hopefully as unobtrusively as possible. I felt that acceptance of the project and proposed methodology by a teacher would at least imply acceptance of a democratically-inclined teaching role. In this role the teacher engages in exploration alongside the students and is able to shift when possible from centre stage to playing a more complex role in creating the space for challenges and questions to arise amongst the students themselves.

In the event, however, the teacher who volunteered to work on the project did not bear out these assumptions and I rapidly found my focus widened to encompass the teacher himself and his role as a central presence in the classroom. My hope that the teacher and I would come increasingly to share a deeper level common framework did not actually materialise. Our year-long working relationship during the classroom stage of the project, with particularly extensive discussions early on, seemed to me blocked and constrained at a surface level consideration of racism. Instead of being able to develop what I had hoped would be a genuinely collaborative relationship with the teacher, I felt fundamentally alienated from his way of relating to students and found him frequently coming into centre focus of my ethnographic study. Although some of the original possibilities of the project were thus stunted, I was on the other hand offered access to observing very closely the attempt to raise issues of racism and justice in an essentially 'traditional' white classroom context. Inevitably

critical questions were thrown up which need to be addressed in undertaking anti-racist work in white schools.

Raising issues of racism in a white environment is an extremely difficult, uncomfortable area in which to be working and in which one has often to move with considerable sensitivity in attempting to effect change. In the course of the project, as a visiting researcher in school, I continually put out and drew in my 'feelers' as it were, depending on the responses of others. In writing this thesis, however, I am putting these 'feelers' aside, in order to make sense of my observations in as open a way as possible. It would be neither honest nor useful for me to attempt to modify my observations and interpretations in the context of research, although I have to acknowledge that the task is more difficult given the shift in researcher-teacher relationship from that which I originally envisaged. It is not possible, for instance, to write an ethnographic study without writing personally. Yet it is certainly not my intention to point any fingers but to try to reveal how racism and racist constructions operate so that we can begin to deconstruct them. I should have greatly preferred to have been able to engage in that process together with the teacher. However, just as I found I had to adjust to a researcher-teacher relationship which was different from my initial conception, the teacher was no doubt from his perspective faced with a parallel difficulty.

Wanting to ground the project from an early stage firmly within the English department as a whole, Paul Brennan had enthusiastically introduced Alan Parsons and myself to each other in January 1988. Alan was a non-Catholic teacher in his mid-thirties, in his thirteenth year of teaching, and with much of his time outside school devoted to school-related activity. He had himself been a pupil at St Benedict's and had been teaching there for the previous eight years, from the time when it was still an independent boys-only school. In our first meeting, in which he was as keen to sound me out as I

him, he had spoken of his South African connections, his parents having emigrated there when he was seventeen. He had refused to join them, not for political reasons, but because he did not see why he should disturb his schooling and put himself in a situation in which he would be conscripted for military training. My diary records first impressions:

7 January 1988: ...I felt it was an honest account in so far as he didn't pretend to a particularly anti-racist perspective, merely recording his sense of alienation from his family's views. He asked me about the project and spoke very practically and usefully about its mechanics. Suggested asking the Religious Education department for one of their periods so as to involve them and also not to run the risk of "crowding out other aspects of the curriculum" for that class.

In retrospect I can see that already in this first meeting Alan was expressing a concern which in the course of the year was to become a major pre-occupation for him - that the project might "crowd out" other English work, and was it not really just as much to do with Religious Education? His worry was that "language and poetry would be squeezed out". As the project offered scope for both these aspects of the English curriculum, the underlying issue was probably more to do with him wanting time and space to develop work determined by himself, as well as his not seeing anti-racism as a priority in education. It was agreed that the project could be allocated two out of the four English sessions per week as well as the drama period.

Although Alan often presented himself as a rather idiosyncratic dissenter on a range of issues, in a long pre-project interview, in September 1989, he revealed a number of deeply conservative perspectives. He spoke of his initial

"degree of suspicion because I wasn't really clear how much the course was going to get in the way of the ordinary English teaching which one would do in the third form."

Although the project had been put forward by the Head of English as something innovative and challenging, Alan said it was not until he realised that I was talking about something

which would be integral to the curriculum, and not an imposition, that he had become interested in the idea. His stated conception of the teacher's role was one intimately concerned with moral guidance. When asked why he had agreed to take on the project when he could simply have continued with his usual third year course, he replied:

"I was particularly interested in taking on a class which I knew and I was particularly interested in seeing how, over the course of the year, a specific preoccupation through the year, could somehow be measured. It wasn't necessarily the fact that it was to do with racism. It was the fact that it had a conscious slant through the year was what fascinated me... It wasn't racism as such. It was the idea that you could take a class that you actually knew you had a good relationship with... that you specifically in the back of your mind all the time were driving in a particular direction and were not necessarily restricting but certainly channelling the activities you did in the lessons... towards a particular frame of mind, towards a particular attitude and to see how that could be altered or shifted or accounted for over the course of the year... I am fundamentally concerned with making them (the students) shift attitudes towards other people and relationships..."

Asked about how his own thinking about racism had developed, Alan's reply was

"I don't think I've ever had any thinking on those particular issues.. I really couldn't say... I suppose over the years I have become more and more intolerant of racism and much more sensitive to the underground preconceptions which emerge from the way people talk and behave and joke and so on that I have become a lot more alert..."

This he said was due largely to the influence of Paul, the outgoing Head of English. However, in the subsequent months I found that Alan's rather 'cut and dried' approach made it difficult to get into detailed discussions about racism and racist perceptions. On the couple of occasions when Paul's presence had enabled this to begin to happen, it had been possible to glimpse something of an underlying uncertainty. Alan's comments on black consciousness, for instance, suggested his understanding of it was limited. He acknowledged a somewhat negative response, on the basis that he rejected white consciousness and he felt that to treat them differently

would be patronising. This desire for a 'balanced' response not only decontextualised racism from the reality of unequal power but reduced it simply to considerations of personal prejudice. In the classroom when Alan's conceptions came to the fore (e.g. in the kind of questions he asked), in my view these tended to limit rather than expand the students' perceptions, indeed sometimes diverting them from aspects within the texts which might have led to increased understanding of a black perspective. Examples of this shall be discussed in detail in later chapters on the novels. Although Alan expressed the need to be informed by me, for example on terminology relating to various people, he seemed to be suggesting that lack of 'knowledge about racism' could basically be addressed by the provision of information rather than that it might involve a fundamental process of re-perception. Furthermore in an interview at the end of the first term, he reiterated even more strongly his earlier statement that it was not the focus on racism as such that he found interesting, stating an increasing interest in a "shift towards a general humanist sensitivity" and that

"racism itself is just the label which applies to a particular type of intolerance and a particular type of insensitivity etcetera... I'm still very interested in the more general shift of ethos in which when it takes place the racism will fall off in any case, be discarded anyway..."

While speaking here in broad terms about being more interested in creating a "general shift of ethos", Alan frequently referred to the capacity of students to say one thing in class (in line with the requisite ethos) and to say or do "completely the opposite" outside. It is a capacity not restricted to students.

There were a number of conflicting strands in Alan's thinking about education in general. Commenting in his pre-project interview on classroom practice and methodology, he appeared aware of the dangers of teachers simply leading students superficially into the 'correct' view instead of encouraging them to develop their own responses and thinking:

"...even at A level when you are doing detailed prose analysis, the moment you open your mouth and start reading that passage out... you are making it a communal response. And whatever little spark of individual insight that might have happened at first glance has gone and within ten minutes as the discussion gets under way you're charging ahead and bulldozing ahead to everyone agreeing. You know the greatest success of an A level lesson is that in the end everybody agrees that yes, Hardy got it wrong or yes, this passage has a sense of malice and so on."

Asked about his particular aims for the course, Alan spoke of his particular interest in encouraging students to articulate immediate individual responses before these had been fashioned into a "communal response". It was through learning more about drama that he felt he had begun to question the "hollow achievement" of simply getting students through exams or simply developing "aesthetic sensitivity". His own understanding of methods and possibilities of drama had been opened up through a colleague who had attended the RSA Drama Course a couple of years previously. He assured me that having me as a constant observer in his classroom would also not disturb him as he had learnt through drama work to find the presence of another person a support rather than an imposition. Furthermore, with drama work having opened him up to possibilities beyond the constraints of the classroom, he felt there was a need to get students "off-site":

"It's partly the preoccupation again with drama that I'm getting increasingly concerned with the degree to which the environment of the school is anti-educational... the kinds of things we're interested in - like sensitivity, like empathy with other cultures and other states of mind, with tolerance and a sense of the humanity of other people - is something which I don't think a school is very good at conveying. I really don't... I think the whole idea of cramming 1400 kids onto a site and presenting them with extremely formalised relationships.. between themselves - which the uniform of course does - that in itself is an agenda which says the relations between you and you are formalised.. and then between them and the whole institution and structure of the school as personified in the teachers. The whole thing is fundamentally dehumanising. How can you start talking about sensitivity and having respect for individuals and actually thinking of other people as people if you're actually in a classroom environment and a whole

institutional environment which is going out to dehumanise you?"

Before embarking on the classroom stage of the project we broadly agreed a pattern of working in which we would exchange our own perceptions of each novel in advance, noting possible points of focus for the students. I would select particular passages to which I wanted the students to respond, either in their journals or around the text on photocopied sheets, or in small discussion groups. I would also seek out poems and other materials linking in to themes within the novels. With regard to drama, we would decide on key themes relating to the texts and Alan would then devise ways of enabling the students to explore these. If I felt the students were having difficulty understanding a particular perspective or issue, I would ask Alan to see if he could 'find a way in' through drama. Alan also welcomed the idea of my bringing in artists to work with the students at various points, where possible being keen for the students to be able to work "off-site". Throughout the course Alan appeared to remain happy with my selecting key points for focusing in on the text in specific ways. During reading he also stopped where he felt it necessary to discuss any points with the students.

Prior to the project I had only seen Alan working with students in a series of evening drama workshops, which took place in the purpose-built drama studio. The students had been out of uniform and the atmosphere relaxed and friendly. Given my impressions on these occasions and Alan's critique of the "anti-educational" nature of school, I was rather taken aback on witnessing his manner in an ordinary classroom context, as recorded in my diary:

Thursday 8 September: ...First time seeing Alan in action in school time. Great contrast to workshop evenings when he was without coat, making coffee alongside students who were in ordinary clothes. Struck of course by numbers of uniformed people. Log jam in corridors outside English rooms. In loud military voice Alan barked instructions about rooms and log jam cleared. Inside the room students stood at desks waiting to be told to sit... in pairs

facing front... Somewhat startled by the formality and the sense of control over the students. Alan clearly adept at controlling the amount of personal rapport allowed.

This sense of control remained one of the central features of Alan's teaching style throughout the year and the project methodology was subsumed within a fundamentally authoritarian-bound, teacher-centred framework. Another feature was that the whole-class discussions reflected adversarial style debate with the teacher largely in control of the questions. Some of the effects of this will be examined in relation to discussions of particular extracts from the novels, raising implications for anti-racist teaching. As the term progressed I was particularly concerned by the lack of participation of the girls in class discussions. There was an imbalance in the numbers (18 boys and 12 girls) and in every class discussion proportionately fewer girls than boys were willing to volunteer responses. Consequently at the end of the first term, with the help of an assistant, I conducted interviews with all the girls, mostly in friendship pairs. The interviews were designed to elicit their perceptions of themselves and gender roles, as well as their explanations for the lack of female participation in class discussions in English.

On one occasion, on hearing a tape of himself conducting a class discussion, Alan acknowledged surprise at the frequent harshness of his tone. When I mentioned that his voice often seemed much less harsh during drama sessions, he attributed this to feeling less secure and less sure of outcomes within drama. He felt that the drama work in which he had become involved over the last two years with his colleague who had followed the RSA course was creating in him a new awareness. Previous to that he said "My idea of drama was role play, acting, theatre". Although the over-riding sense of control was much less prominent within Alan's drama work and there was a more relaxed atmosphere within the drama studio, students

still however often seemed engaged more in performance rather than allowing themselves to get absorbed in process. The question of types of drama will be explored further in the chapter on the project's drama work (Chapter Eleven).

The format of many English lessons was that of reading the text before undertaking a specific activity which might involve written or oral response. Alan placed a strong emphasis on reading aloud and reading-around-the-class. He would participate himself, often taking over the reading at key points to create a sense of drama. He rarely stayed in one place in the room and tended to pace around between the desks to the back of the class, in contrast to the students and myself who most of the time were seated. In the main English room the desks were arranged in pairs facing forwards. My usual place was in a side-corner at the front, facing the students and next to the tape recorders. I used two recorders for the class sessions as a fail-safe measure. The room had no display board space for students' work, two sides of the room containing large windows, the third stock cupboards and the fourth the blackboard. A board in the outside corridor displayed the same poster (advertising a number of books) for the whole year.

Whenever there were group discussions it was necessary for the students to rearrange themselves. Alan indicated that he had not been accustomed to having small group discussions in English lessons although this was common practice within his drama sessions. However after looking at some of the transcripts he commented that he was pleasantly surprised at the quality of talk being generated. He acknowledged having been disturbed by the initially higher noise level, as well as teething problems in the students getting accustomed to working with the tape recorders. For much of the time the students worked in the same six groups of five students each. Given that the boys outnumbered the girls three to two, I attempted to ensure that there were two girls in each group

and that they were friends who could support each other, although when people were absent this did not always work out. Early on in the first term the students were asked to fill out a sheet indicating the class members of both sexes with whom they enjoyed talking (Appendix 4.4). This not only helped me gain a picture of friendship patterns within the class, but was useful in deciding on the group structures. Apart from the criterion that everyone should, wherever possible, have at least two other people in the group (one male, one female) with whom they enjoyed talking, I was also keen for purposes of the research to place students with differing scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale in the same groups rather than having only students with broadly similar scores working together.

While Alan acknowledged the value of the small group discussions and said he would continue using them in his teaching, his preferred mode within English lessons nevertheless remained question-and-answer whole class discussions. If one has developed a teaching style which one regards as successful, it feels rather like a comfortable old coat - and it is not easy to discard. In many ways Alan appeared to me confined by deeply embedded ways of relating to students. It struck me that much of his teaching style and techniques of class control probably derived from the days when he was himself a student at St Benedict's when it was an independent boys' school. He had been addressed by surname and the practice was still current when he joined the staff. It was only after I had attended the first of the evening drama workshops in June 1988, that Alan revealed how up until then he had in fact still been using surnames to address pupils, both girls and boys. Although most of the other staff used first names, his reputation had stuck and he believed the children took it as "a quaint anachronism". Indeed until recently he had never thought it important, admitting that the only time he had ever felt guilty about calling children by their surnames was in extra-curricular situations such as working on a play. However, he had now taken a decision to

tell his classes that he was going to change the way he addressed them. It turned out to be a habit hard to break and with the project class he would at times revert to surnames, with certain male students in particular.

While at a theoretical level Alan would ask potentially self-critical questions about himself and his effect on students, at another more concrete level he found it difficult to take on board some of their actual comments. For instance after seeing the general points brought up by the girls in their interviews, written up in a form that preserved anonymity (Appendix 4.3), he questioned the possible effect of his teaching style:

"I wonder the extent to which there is a hidden curriculum in my own manner and I wonder again how much there is a contradiction in that my teaching technique.. my teaching background is fairly disciplinarian and that there might be confusion in their minds as to where I stand.. because on the one hand I might be implying a set of values which my own moodiness is then promptly invalidating. I can't see that there's much I can do about it actually, but I want to ask you whether you think that could be so?"

However, when I put forward a common perception of many of the girls that they held back entering class discussions because of a reluctance to be judged (even when the matter in hand was clearly one of opinion), Alan found that difficult to understand:

"...this is what confuses me. I mean I can't in all honesty think of any time when I've been teaching the class when I've suggested there is a right or wrong or even suggested that I want to be judgemental about the responses they give."

Furthermore, he found himself "a little suspicious of the girls' self-portrayal as wilting violets". While on the one hand acknowledging an erratic temperament and that he was given to bouts of extreme irritability and sudden "blow ups" with the attitude of "there's not much I can do about it", Alan seemed baffled and acknowledged "frankly a sense of injustice" at the girls' comments. He felt he even went out of his way to encourage the girls and they got a lot of "positive

publicity" when it came to their written work which was generally better than that of the boys.

A further apparent contradiction, between rhetoric and practice, was that while campaigning vigorously against set examinations for English and the notion of attainment targets in favour of profiling and long-term assessment of students' work, Alan rigorously and regularly graded the students' work with marks out of 10 or 20. This applied to their poems as well as essays, with marks being deducted for spelling corrections not previously undertaken. In other words, marks were overtly linked to discipline and control as well as being a judgement on the students' work. Only their reader-response sheets and reading journals were not graded. The central criteria for marking essays appeared to be concerned with what Alan referred to as "transactional English" i.e. matters of grammar, punctuation, paragraphing and spelling.

Given these apparently deep-set patterns in his traditional practice as an English teacher, Alan's original concern about the project coming to "crowd out" his ordinary English teaching was understandable. Although the project had introduced him to certain strategies which he said he would continue (such as the use of reading journals and small group taped discussions), by the end of the first term Alan was feeling that his first instinct had been right - that is, that the project would be an "imposition" rather than something integral to what he regarded as his ordinary third year course. As early as November he reported feeling "disenfranchised" as an English teacher. The students were not getting sufficient "transactional language work". He felt they needed practice for instance in writing letters, "even if it was boring". Ironically, with all the visitors to the project there was considerable opportunity for letter-writing for real audiences and for real purposes, but these were not taken up.

Alan's views about the central place of literature in the project appeared somewhat ambiguous. At times he expressed the view that reading was taking up too much class time since normally he would only spent one lesson a week on the class "reader". However in his interview at the end of the first term he commented that "the higher profile" for literature was proving fruitful. The problem was that he felt the students were missing out on "a much wider experience of poetry than what the project is giving them". Ordinarily he "would have been working systematically through the poetry book", devoting two lessons a week to it. Clearly it was not possible for him to achieve all his previous specific objectives in the remaining half of English time each week. 'Language work' was only occasionally allowed to arise from the project, Alan generally wanting to set up essays independently. His feeling of being constantly hard-pressed for time was exacerbated by occasions when the project spread into other English lessons. This happened particularly in the first term, through visitors and special inputs requiring preparation and follow-up work. In addition on a few occasions Alan also used his weekly poetry lesson for poetry linked with the project. However after the first term he clearly wanted the project to be more strictly contained.

By May, Alan was complaining that the students' "technical accuracy had got worse" and that they had "missed out on the constant drip-feed over technical accuracy". He said it was embarrassing for him as next year someone would need to do a "rescue job on them". There were occasions in my presence, or of which he informed me, when he "blasted" the class for not taking sufficient care with their punctuation, spelling and grammar. He let them know that he felt their English was deteriorating. Feeling the need for independent assessment, I sought the opinion of the LEA English Adviser and was reassured from his responses to a set of class essays that they represented a reasonable and normal spectrum. It seems probable that their teacher's opinion of deteriorating

standards played a part in shaping students' views of the work they were undertaking in English and I shall be exploring this further (see Chapters 13-15).

A concern which I shared, however, with Alan was the pace of the project. There were clearly times when it would have been better to proceed more slowly, allowing students space to explore aspects in greater depth and to get more feedback on their own responses - for example by allowing increased time for sharing written responses with each other and developing reflection. The use of other English time was clearly precluded for these purposes. In the original research design it was my intention that the final term would be devoted to literature arising from a British context. However the preceding four novels took longer to work through than expected and in order to address the British context I approached the Religious Education department for time in which the students could view and discuss the BBC series Getting to Grips With Racism with Gerald Carey, the Senior Teacher.

While time within the classroom became pressed, time for discussion between Alan and myself also became increasingly problematic. Ideally at least one period a week needed to be built into the project teacher's timetable for discussion and reflection, enabling us regularly to exchange observations, thoughts and feelings. Although I had originally asked whether this might be possible, it proved not to be. It was also impossible to talk in any meaningful way during breaks in the school day because Alan was frequently tied up with administrative and pastoral commitments. During the spring and summer terms Alan became Acting Head of English, with a range of extra responsibilities. It was a period of considerable pressure, tension and uncertainty caused by the vacant post. Having applied for it unsuccessfully on two previous occasions (before and after Paul Brennan's time as Head of Department), Alan believed himself to be hampered as a non-Catholic. He was

finally successful, however, in applying for a Head of English post at a Grammar school in another authority.

In addition to the additional departmental work, Alan also initiated various extra-curricular activities which meant that time for collaborative reflection on the project was further reduced. This left us only with out-of-school hours and meant that he had to give up time at weekends. Although an extremely hard worker who seemed to enjoy always being fully stretched, Alan increasingly communicated the implicit message that making time for detailed discussion was not a priority for him. His weekends became less available and essential planning had to take place over the telephone or in hurried conversations before lessons. Whereas in the first term we met fairly regularly, mostly at weekends (9 occasions for generally 2-3 hours), in the subsequent terms our meetings were substantially reduced (Spring term 4 meetings; Summer term - 3 meetings). It was unfortunate that the school had not been able to timetable a period a week for regular evaluation and planning, as I had originally hoped, which would have considerably eased the pressure on the project teacher's personal time. In retrospect, it may have been better to have kept a stricter time limit on the earlier meetings, although it is not possible to know whether this alone would have led to a greater willingness on the part of the project teacher to continue meeting regularly. It seems likely, however, that a stricter time constraint would have confined our discussions to practicalities from the very beginning.

Given a situation where the nature of my collaboration with the project teacher was very different from that which I would have wished, it was nevertheless important to sustain as reasonable a working relationship as possible over the year. In the first term I felt faced with an acute dilemma. Alan's authoritarian approach and rather temperamental manner with the students seemed to undermine not only the project methodology but to set up a questionable context in which to

be addressing issues of justice and equality. As the project was meant to be a collaborative enterprise, I felt I should attempt to share some of my perceptions with Alan. As mentioned previously, he had come into my focus as a central agent in the classroom, and it seemed wrong to pretend my interest was only in the students and not in the whole classroom context. The problem was how to approach this with him in a constructive way that he would not perceive as undermining and threatening, thus jeopardising the project. The teacher-researcher relationship is a sensitive one and unless it can be set up in a genuinely collaborative way - the ideal as suggested by Stredder (1978) being a sharing/exchanging of roles - the teacher is in the constantly vulnerable position of being observed and scrutinised.

The information gained from interviewing the girls in December 1988 (Appendix 4.3) and the question of gender roles seemed to provide a possible way forward and a means of bringing up classroom relationships through the evidence of the girls' perceptions. Alan had previously shown an interest in focusing on gender issues in his drama work. However his response to the girls' accounts of their lack of participation - indicating their sense of vulnerability in the classroom - was essentially a defensive one and my attempt to open up the issues in our meeting prior to the Spring term was not successful. Judged simply by the amount of discussion time Alan was prepared to make available, after our initial burst of meetings in September and October 1988, already by November he was reducing his commitment. It was necessary for him to retain an adequate level of contact for planning, but the kind of reflexivity I had envisaged was missing.

In his interview of December 1988, Alan acknowledged that the students were enjoying "the difference in the English lessons" and that there were a number of positive features such as the special inputs from visitors as well as "a whole range of strategies which I would ordinarily not use". This

was countered by certain dissatisfactions. He felt confused by the amount of "material pumped out to the kids which has then come back to us and I just don't feel that I have had time to assess it, value it, put any sort of intellectual pattern into it." He felt the drama sessions he had been asked to devise to explore various issues had not really worked and were not really "his kind of drama". In addition he was not able to build up a momentum for English activities of his own devising.

While keeping up with reading, let alone responding to, the amount of student writing generated by reading journals and response sheets can be a very real problem, I felt that Alan's frustration was nevertheless more deeply rooted. His perception that the students' "transactional English" was deteriorating seemed to provide a hook for his increasing tension. With the pressure of school and public examinations in May and June 1989, we had no out-of-school meetings from mid-April until July, just before the beginning of the 'Media Week' led by Olusola Oyeleye. Given that Alan had no time to spare, while keeping him informed of developments through a series of draft proposals concerning Media Week and the involvement of visitors, it had been necessary to go ahead with planning, chiefly with Olusola. The workshops involved the students in the most direct challenge within the project to consider racism in a local context. The many layers of issues raised by the Media Week are explored in Chapter Thirteen, but one of the central events was that Alan's frustration finally burst. Stating that he had been marginalised, he informed me that, although there remained a couple of weeks until the end of term, the project would have to end with Media Week. In the staffroom, and to the Headteacher, he complained that the students were being subjected to "saturation bombing" and "indoctrination". During a hotseating session on the first day of Media Week, for which he had volunteered, he made explicit to the students that he felt racism was a topic more appropriate to Religious

Education than to English. In addition, his demeanour and body language throughout the week overtly communicated indifference if not hostility to the visitors (who were mainly black), as well as to the issues with which the students were being asked to engage. As an authority figure who had introduced the week by reminding the students to be "courteous to the visitors", he unfortunately provided a highly ambiguous model. Given the nature of the challenge Olusola was posing - "What does racism mean to you?" - instead of playing a supportive role in helping the students face a difficult question for themselves, the class teacher appeared to undercut it.

CHAPTER SIX: 'CULTURAL ANALYSIS' AND RESPONSES TO BUDDY - INITIAL EXPLORATIONS INTO RACISM IN A FICTIONAL LOCAL CONTEXT

The framework for reader-response: 'Personal growth' or 'cultural analysis'?

The order in which the novels were introduced was carefully considered (Chapter 2: 48). Beginning with a contemporary British novel to which I felt the students would easily relate and where racism remained a side issue, the students were moved through the fiction to Germany in the 1930s, then to the American south in the 1930s, and from there to South Africa in recent times. As mentioned earlier, it was my intention to relocate issues of racism in a British context in the final term, but shortage of time reduced this literature element considerably. The British context was firmly established however within the series of Religious Education lessons allocated to the BBC series Getting to Grips with Racism, as well as being addressed in a number of drama sessions and the final Media Week.

The tradition of English teaching within which I felt the project teacher Alan Parsons saw himself working was one which largely prioritised the 'personal growth' view of English i.e. a view emphasising "the relationship between language and learning in the individual child, and the role of literature in developing children's imaginative and aesthetic lives" (DES, 1989). In interview he said he had been most influenced by John Dixon's (1967) Growth through English, a seminal publication of the late 1960s from the National Association for the Teaching of English. While texts for the project met various criteria of literary worth, they also however provided rich material for developing the 'cultural analysis' view implicit in my research design i.e. a view which "emphasises the role of English in helping children towards a critical understanding of the world and cultural environment in which they live" (DES, 1989). As the English National Curriculum

Working Party noted these approaches are not mutually exclusive.

While hoping that the students' verbal and written responses would provide evidence of their frames of reference in responding to what I saw as key issues in each of the texts, I also hoped to detect possible shifts in perception and understanding over the course of the year. The brief was a complex one and I was aware of the selective nature of my investigation. While using various 'reader-response' strategies, I did not generally try to discover what was going on 'inside the reader's head'. That would require extremely detailed focus on particular readers' responses to specific passages or poems in an attempt to uncover individual variations in the process of evocation of the text. Although I did initially consider limiting my focus to the responses of four individuals in the class (selected on the basis of contrasting scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale), I decided that my purposes would be better served by retaining a wider focus across the whole class. I would thus be less concerned with trying to trace the processes and psychology of response in pre-selected individuals, than with detecting perceptual filters - both personal and common - which appeared to be operating amongst the students more generally. I collected a vast quantity of potential data from which to gather evidence: thirty reading journals (the longest being 127 pages), up to thirty-one additional response sheets for each student, tape recordings of almost all the project's sessions (including drama), recordings of all group discussions (ten separate themes over the year, discussed by six groups each), video recordings of the five Media Week sessions, in addition to interview material and my own diary observations.

With such a large store of data I am aware of having to omit much of it for the purpose of this study. I have attempted, however, not to omit anything which would prove contradictory to my broad findings. I am conscious of sacrificing the

richness of individual case-studies in order to provide a wider scan of the frames of reference operating within responses to the texts. While space has not permitted me to include such case-studies as well, I hope that the data I present will indicate the possibilities of closely researching the construction of responses of individual readers in relation to wider frames of reference in the society.

Although novels formed the core of the year's course, drama and other sessions, including those with visitors, were closely interlinked. While in this and subsequent chapters on the novels I shall be focusing on the students' responses chiefly in relation to what they had been reading, it is necessary to bear in mind that these responses were arising from a range of inter-related experiences which cannot be isolated from each other. Occasionally we can see that the related experience appears to have had a significant impact on subsequent responses to the text.

Outline of 'Buddy' and related activities

The central theme in Nigel Hinton's novel (first published 1982) is that of an English teenager's difficulty in accepting the break-up of his parents' marriage. In a desperate move to establish a life for herself, Buddy's mother leaves her thirteen-year-old son and husband Terry, a Buddy Holly fanatic who appears to live on fantasy. Buddy is left to cope with his errant 'Teddy Boy' father who already has one jail term behind him. In addition, although Buddy is white like the majority of students in the 'Express' class at school, he is isolated through being working class and obviously poor. His only real friends are two resilient black twins, Charmian and Julius Rybeero, isolated through racism.

The novel contains a range of themes and the extracts selected for specific responses (Appendices 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4) focused on Buddy's relationships with his peers, his mother and his father, as well as touching on racism. When students hotseated

each other in role - and subsequently Millie Murray as Charmian and Mrs Rybeero - racism formed only part of a much wider canvas of concerns.

In order to allow exploration of the students' sense of themselves as young people and potential feelings of constriction, the students were introduced to a slightly truncated version of James Berry's poem 'Dreaming Black Boy' (Appendices 5.5, 5.6). It was re-titled 'I Wish' in order to gather their responses (jottings around the text and small group discussions) without having identified for them the fact that the poet, or the central young voice in the poem, was black. In the following lesson however, after hearing a short interview with James Berry in which he spoke about why he had written the poem and how he had drawn on his own experiences as a black person, they were then asked to respond to the same poem again¹. Students also wrote and discussed their own 'I Wish' poems.

In drama the focus was on their own experiences of being victims of 'jokes', followed by conflicts or differences in outlook between adults and children. The students were introduced to the latter through a poem called 'The Row' (Appendix 5.7), written by a fifteen year-old girl. The rationale behind the drama as well as the poetry activities was that it was important to start the project with the students being able to explore some of their own perspectives, interests and entitlements as young people.

Given these intentions, Buddy provided a useful starting off point for the project course, proving a popular choice with nearly all the students. It also enabled me to gather an idea

¹ In the summer term, following a visit by James Berry, the students made a third response to the full poem, this time correctly titled. Space has unfortunately prevented me including the data and analysis of this whole unit of work, the findings of which reinforced rather than gainsaid students' responses in other contexts.

of the ways in which the students approached both reading and responding in a journal before the introduction of the novels more specifically related to themes such as inequality, injustice and racism. I also wanted to see whether students would be sensitive to the issues of racism within Buddy or whether they would tend to pass them over as not being central to the story.

Responses surrounding the racist joke incident

The first passage to which students were asked to respond (Appendix 5.1), by making jottings around the photocopied text, provided a particularly good opportunity for this. In it Buddy compromises himself by joining in "the general chuckle" with the Express class at a racist joke directed at his two absent friends (Buddy, Chapter Two). The joke is condoned by the teacher Mr Normington, and Buddy, instead of openly defending the twins or at least not participating, submits to his desire "to belong". He hates himself for the betrayal and sees his later humiliation by the teacher as his punishment. I was particularly interested in how students would respond to this incident in view of only 43% of the class in the first survey having categorically rejected the statement that "Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun". Apart from responding individually in writing to the extract, the students discussed the first two chapters of the book in groups. They were encouraged to note in their reading journals any shifts or reinforcement of their views after the discussion.

Some questions of gender

While most students made some reference to racism and nine of them - all girls - expressed personal disapproval, only three students (John, Terry and Michael) made no reference in their writing to any element of racism, or even simply to colour. All three were above average in expressing racist perceptions as judged on the first Racist Perceptions Scale, with John being the highest scorer in the class. I was particularly

interested in Michael's responses as he struck me as a sensitive boy, without some of the male bravado that seemed to be a dimension of both John and Terry's behaviour. In his discussion group (Michael, Marco, Marion, Caroline) Michael focused on Buddy's poverty and his maltreatment by a class of "snobby children" who were "cruel" to Buddy (in the litter incident) as well as on Buddy's need for his mum, including her income ("I mean a boy can't survive without his mother you know"). Neither he nor Marco followed up statements contributed by both the girls in their group, Marion and Caroline, condemning the racism and the teacher's complicity:

MARION: I feel strongly about the way the teacher was letting all the racist remarks about the twins happen and the way Buddy was feeling left out and all he could do was laugh instead of acting like he was their friends.

MARCO: Right and now we can go on to the next person in our group...

...

CAROLINE: I think that instead of the teacher joining in on the joke of the coloured boys and the fruit stall I think he should have told the children off about it.

MARCO: That's right. Thank you very much Caroline and now we go on with a social discussion, where we can hear everyone discussing very clearly...²

This was the students' first experience of group discussions in the year and I gathered it had not been a customary procedure within English classes for them, certainly not with the additional use of a tape recorder. In this group Marco, acting rather like a compere, controlled the microphone and his responses seem to have been somewhat conditioned by the novelty of the situation. However, on both occasions when the girls referred to racism he moved the discussion elsewhere. His own response seemed to be largely focused on the social class difference between Buddy and the majority, although he didn't go beyond expressing personal distaste that "it was a very high social class and I don't think he (Buddy) belongs there". While Marco was amongst those showing the lowest

2 Transcription conventions used throughout text:
.. indicates brief hesitation or pause by speaker
... indicates speech omitted from transcription
- indicates speaker is cut-off by next speaker

degree of racist perceptions on the first survey, he seemed satisfied here by predicting that Buddy would one day get his revenge on the "horrible" Mr Normington. One can only speculate on how much Marco was maintaining a low profile in terms of his own response to the specific racist elements at this point. Over the year it became apparent that his understanding of racism was linked to his own ethnic minority experience as an Italian and that he had generally adopted a strategy of assimilation. The net effect in the discussion, however, was that the girls' criticism of the racism in the classroom incident was lost.

A further interesting gender dimension developed in the discussion by these four students about Buddy's theft of five pounds from his mother's purse, to pay for a school outing which she could not afford. While all sympathised with Buddy's sense of isolation and desire not to be left out, both boys (especially Marco) seemed more inclined to justify Buddy's action than the girls. In contrast, Marion and Caroline maintained a firmer moral position, insisting that Buddy should have tried to discuss the matter with his mother and looked for other solutions.

A similar gender pattern emerged in Terry's group (Alison, Julia, Louise, Terry, Greg). Once again the focus on racism was initiated, and indeed sustained for a short while, by girls in the group. While Terry's friend Greg (also with a medium high score on the first Racist Perceptions Scale) appeared to reinforce disapproval of the twins being picked on because of their colour, Terry switched the conversation onto Buddy's isolation because the class were "a bunch of snobs". Like Marco he wanted Buddy to "get his revenge". In this group the girls were rather more effective than in the previous group in holding on to their responses to the racism. However when Julia and Louise declared they would have "stood up to them (the class) and told them it wasn't funny", Terry completely re-focused the discussion onto a justification of

Buddy's theft of the five pounds from his mum. Here he was directly challenged by Louise ("...but it's still thieving") and quickly gave way, although probably at lip-service level only. It seems likely that the balance of three girls to two boys in this group influenced its dynamics, giving the girls more confidence. All three girls in this group rarely spoke in class discussions despite expressing themselves strongly at times in their reading journals.

Sympathy for Buddy's Isolation

Throughout all the discussions, there seemed to be considerable sympathy for Buddy's isolation. John (the highest scorer on the first Racist Perceptions Scale) saw Buddy's isolation as responsible for his friendship with the Rybeero twins. It seems he found it necessary to justify a white-black friendship:

GRAHAM: Why do you think the black people were the only people that he knew and liked?

TONY: It was really that they were his own type of people. He could chat to them and they had been friends ever since.

JOHN: I think um the black people were his friends because they were um.. Buddy didn't really get on in the class and neither did they. That's why I think that um he made friends with the black people.

John also used fear of isolation as justification for participation in a racist joke. When Donald, the fourth member of this group, strongly condemned the behaviour of the class and its teacher ("I hate people that make jokes about blacks"), John did not challenge this openly. Instead he opened up room for query:

JOHN: Would you have laughed though when he made the joke 'cause if you hadn't laughed wouldn't you have felt a bit out of.. you know-

DONALD (emphatically): No! um I don't..this is a full stop. I mean I hate people that make jokes about blacks...

GRAHAM: But even if you were one of the children not Buddy but one of the children in the class wouldn't you have laughed?

Not surprisingly, both John and Graham had agreed with the survey statement that "Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun." Despite his emphatic response and

general doggedness, Donald was open to confusion and an easy butt himself for jokes. His tendency to contradict himself was revealed on the first page of his journal where he repeated his statement against racist jokes a few lines after having referred to Chinese food as "chinky" (commenting on the front picture showing Buddy and his father with 'take-away' food).

The consequences of not joining in the joke were taken up in another group where the conversation was almost totally dominated by the boys (Philip, Andrew, Simon, Jacky, Gaby). Simon began by raising the question:

SIMON: I know it's not very kind to laugh at it but if you hadn't you probably would have been embarrassed if you hadn't have laughed.

By the end of the discussion, after Philip had declared how "really cruel" the joke was - and had gone further to say he probably would not have laughed - Simon seemed even clearer about his position:

SIMON: I would have laughed like um I must admit I wouldn't have just stood there and not laughed because it would have been embarrassing for him as well.

Writing in his journal after the discussion Simon noted that his own focus seemed to be more on Buddy's feelings "while the rest of the group were talking about the coloured twins joke". Although he noted this difference in perspective, there was no indication that his own had shifted.

"You just don't get racist teachers"

An area of common agreement across the class, however, was reflected in widespread criticism of the teacher. In discussion and writing a couple of students even queried whether a teacher would actually behave in as racist a manner as Mr Normington. For instance the following student, Paul, reveals considerable confidence in the teaching profession:

PAUL: No teachers would be racist. I mean they would know better. I know it's just a story but I mean, you just don't get racist teachers.

Although a couple of students indicated that Mr Normington reminded them of a teacher they had come across, it appeared

that most students in St Benedict's generally expected authority to uphold certain values, including fairness and justice. A couple of students in fact referred to Mr Normington as having "stooped down" to the level of the children.

Contrasts: Angela and Ian

The most rigorous of the taped discussions on this occasion took place amongst the group including Angela, the Irish-born student who from the first had stood out as the only girl who did not hold back in whole class discussions. Although the group had three girls to two boys (Angela, Tanya, Erica, Ian, Neil), Angela would most likely have held her own in any group, her contribution clearly being the most dominant. The discussion was distinguished by the students not only offering their own affective responses to the racism and class prejudice but exploring to some extent how they worked, as well as making connections with their own experiences in a banded school. This analytical approach was largely led by Angela. Whereas some students in other groups had spoken about the majority of the Express stream children as "snobby" or "posh", no one had moved much beyond expressing personal repulsion. The opening dialogue of this group indicates Angela's strong influence as well as some pointed contributions from others:

ANGELA: I think my strongest point of what I found in there was the insulting one about the fruit shop.. the joke that they played.

NEIL: Yeah, and the fact that the teacher joined in it as well meaning that he's setting a bad example.

IAN: I think he should really stop the class from having jibes at the person instead of joining in himself.

TANYA: Yeah, especially the racist jokes.

NEIL: And when they are not there either, which is even worse.

TANYA: I've never met a teacher like that, never met a teacher who has said that.

ANGELA: I have! I won't tell you who (giggles).. I think it's really bad.

ERICA: I think if I was Buddy in that situation I would have laughed as well not to be left out of the class-

ANGELA: I wouldn't.

ERICA: ..and not to be left out of the joke.

TANYA/NEIL?: No I wouldn't.

ANGELA: If they're his strongest friends and they stick up for him when they're there even though there are two of them um I would stick up for them.

ERICA: Yeah I know but if you hadn't you see everybody would have started picking on you and saying-

TANYA?: They pick on him anyway don't they?

ANGELA: Yeah but it's your belief isn't it really? They're upper class they are bound to pick on him anyway because he's only working class.

ERICA: O.K.

(Pause and whispering)

IAN: I think another point is the thing that struck me most was he wished the twins weren't away because if you are in a classroom on your own you get very lonely especially with people taking the micky out of you.

With Angela so forthright, it's difficult to know whether Erica had indeed changed her position when she said "O.K." or was simply wanting to deflect the conversation. Ian (the second highest scorer on the first Racist Perceptions Scale and who later revealed himself to be the class's most adept racist joker) not only steered clear of confronting Angela but joined in by focusing on the teacher "having jibes at the person" without being specific about the nature of those jibes. Interestingly, after the brief pause, he re-focused the discussion on Buddy's sense of isolation, quickly slipping into the closer pronoun "you" when speaking about being lonely and "people taking the micky out of you".

As in responses elsewhere, Ian revealed here his own identification with feelings of isolation. However evidence of how his racist frame of reference set parameters to this identification was strongly reflected in his sequence of responses to James Berry's poem 'Dreaming Black Boy'. On the first occasion when it was presented to the students entitled 'I Wish' (Appendix 5.5) without any information on the identity of the poet and voice within the poem, Ian revealed intense empathy with the sense of being put down.³ On

³ Responding to the statement "I wish life wouldn't spend me out/ opposing." Ian wrote: "It reminds me of a day when everything I did went wrong, terribly wrong and I though life was begin to oppose me. You feel just ready to give up."

responding a second time with the knowledge that the central voice was that of a black child, he distanced himself, making no first-person statements and restricted himself to third person commentary. It is a matter of conjecture how conscious Ian was of covering up his real feelings from the rest of the group in this discussion, given the general disapproval of the racism. His journal comment on the text at this point suggests a possible strategy of giving what he thought would be 'appropriate'.

"It is very good also of the reason he (Buddy) has grown to like two people of a different race and colour. It shows that either your home background has made no favours by discouraging friends or you are placed with people which you think are SNOBS."

His very formulation, however, indicates that he holds deep constructs of 'racial' difference, finding it necessary for instance to explain how people of "a different race and colour" could in fact be friends. While the second survey revealed that Ian's racist frame of reference indeed became more entrenched by the end of the project, there was evidence in the course of the year of him not only using racist joking as a means of asserting his own perceptions and undermining possible anti-racist consensus (Chapter 12: 299, Footnote 2), but also of him becoming more explicit in his views (Chapter 13: 327).

Returning to the conversation quoted above one can see a strong interplay of affective and cognitive responses. Angela's initial personal response to the "insulting" joke was followed immediately by Neil's identification of the teacher's role in perpetuating the insult by "setting a bad example" and Tanya's pointed comment that the insult had special significance because it was racist. After some of the group had stated how they thought they would have behaved if in a similar position to Buddy's, Angela attempted to see the pattern in what had happened. It was a matter of "belief" and of fundamental class hierarchy. Her confident tone suggests terms such as "upper class" and "working class" were familiar constructs, to which she had quite possibly been introduced at

home. Certainly she seemed to bring to the discussion a level of analysis not evident in the other groups. A further example of this ability to analyse was reflected in Angela's reference to the author and his construction of the character Buddy. It was this line of thinking that probably led Tanya to making an important observation about the presence of black characters in the book:

ANGELA: ...a point that struck me was how desperate the author makes Buddy.. makes the character Buddy feel for change in his life which given his background is understandable because everybody else has probably got you know their own parents and they live in a big house and they get lifts to school and pocket money and all that lot and he doesn't.

IAN: I think if they understood his problem I think they would never treat him as they treat him now.

ANGELA: Exactly.

(Pause)

TANYA: It's a good point that the author mentioned the black.. the black kids.

ANGELA: Yeah but you don't usually get that in a lot of books.

TANYA: No, no.

ANGELA: I think that's a good point.

TANYA: And all the snide remarks.

ANGELA: Another point you know the Express classes.. you know he's always talking about all the standards and everything. That reminds me of this school...

Tanya's reference to black characters was an interesting development of a comment she had previously made in her passage-response sheet. In relation to a sentence about Buddy never having had black friends before, she had written:

"I think that's a good point to make. The way that the word 'Black' is used instead of 'coloured'. I have had black mates before and they don't like being called 'coloured' they wouldn't mind so much being called Nigros than coloured."

It was unfortunate that I did not pick out this comment at the time and suggest a way of using it to raise the consciousness of the other students regarding terminology. It should have been possible to have embedded such a discussion within a framework of dealing with issues raised by the students themselves, rather than it being identified as a focus of specific teacher-concern. I have already referred to the failure of the methodology, given the heavy programme and

constraints of time, to allow sufficient time always for feed-back and reflection on student responses. Alternatively, had the teacher been more amenable to links between lessons set aside for 'language work' and the course, exploration of this kind of issue would have had a natural place in terms of 'knowledge about language'. As it was, despite the term 'black' being used by the teacher and all the visitors to the project, as well as in the literature itself, some of the students (including those with low scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale) continued to use the term 'coloured'. Some students used both terms, including on occasions even Tanya.

Angela can be seen, at the end of this last transcript extract, yet again moving the discussion on, into consideration of some of the effects of banding in their own school. It is worth noting that Angela, like many other students, was incorporating points she had made in her passage-response sheet into the discussion, where she was able to share and expand them. A final point about Angela's contribution was that she was the only student to place an explicitly positive focus on the black characters at this stage, not simply perceiving them passively as friends of Buddy's or as victims of racism. Instead, when referring to Buddy's humiliating treatment by the teacher and class, she noted how "The twins give him courage to take it lightly and help him carry on." While a few students in their passage-response sheets focused on "the spiteful jibes" experienced by the twins, Angela was the only person to underline the whole phrase about Buddy's admiration for "the cheerful way they ignored all the spiteful jibes". Possibly their positive resilience was something to which she could relate in terms of her own experience of finding ways of responding to anti-Irish jibes. Angela's responses come under closer scrutiny, with some contradictions surfacing later through a rather revealing role play and hotseating session (Chapter 11: 264) and when caught up in Ian's racist joking (Chapter 12: 299, Footnote 2).

Given that Buddy as a character elicits considerable sympathy from readers and that the twins are portrayed as cheerful, supportive and friendly towards him, it would have been surprising had any of the students shown actual antipathy towards them. They are essentially assimilable by white readers, including those holding more entrenched racist frames of reference. It is common to hear of people who articulate racist stereotypes, at the same time claiming that a friend of theirs, who potentially fits into their stereotyped group, is not included - "Oh I'm not talking about 'x'... he's different, he's my mate!" Julius and Charmian could easily be seen as special exceptions. For instance, Ian wrote in his journal:

"The twins seem to come down to earth with Buddy and do what most people would do together. They are treated differently by the class but just one of the guys by Buddy. They seem to get stronger each day."

There seems to be a sense of surprise in Ian's formulation that the twins "would do what most people would do together". Why otherwise would he mention it? His perspective was in marked contrast with that of Alison, who seemed to be trying to express the idea of equality without denial of difference - in other words the opposite of assimilation:

"I like the way that Julius and Charmian treat him (Buddy) they treat him like they have no differences but they don't really take away the colour."

Responses to Buddy at the Satellite Club: "one of the few whites"

For most of the book the twins being black doesn't present a challenge either to Buddy or to the white reader. The few exceptions to this include the racist joking incident and when Buddy's father makes racist comments about the twins' family. But perhaps the sharpest, albeit brief, challenge occurs in Chapter Five when Buddy visits the Satellite Club, a youth club attended mainly by young black people. The author notes that Buddy's strategy is to arrive late so that Julius and Charmian would already be there as "he still felt a bit awkward about being one of the few whites among so many

blacks." The tension is sharpened by the author introducing a black friend of Julius' called Dennis whose attitude towards Buddy is clearly one of hostility. Buddy is unsettled because "The boy's eyes had been filled with hatred". Julius attempts to set Buddy at ease by telling him not to worry about Dennis:

"Hey, you play ok," Julius said, coming up to him at the end. Buddy shrugged but he felt like smiling. "Where's that other bloke?" "Oh, Dennis - he's gone. Don't mind him - he had a bit of bother from some white kids at his school today." "So did I," Buddy said. "Yeah - yeah I should've told him that. Not the same, though." "Why not?" "Just isn't," Julius said vaguely and then groaned. "Oh no - it's the Minister..."

While the author does not explore Julius' point that the trouble experienced by Dennis is not the same as that undergone by Buddy, the incident nevertheless provides a good opening to discuss the issues. For example, what makes racist name-calling different from other name-calling when each is personally hurtful to the recipient? After reading Chapter Five, the students were asked to write their immediate responses in their journals. This was then followed by a class discussion (Appendix 5.8). Although it contains interesting evidence relating to some of the students' conceptions, my chief reason for including it in full is for the data it provides on the role of the teacher. While I shall be drawing on extracts below which are revealing in terms of the teacher's own predispositions, the whole transcript offers an example of the manner in which the tightly teacher-controlled question and answer format significantly set the agenda for discussion. With a conception of racism which appeared to be largely limited to the personal level and the feelings people have about each other, Alan was not only unable to help students explore fundamental aspects of structural racism, but the transcript reveals him actually directing the students away from a deeper understanding, when a couple of them indeed seemed to be moving in that direction. Finally this transcript also shows the extent to which boys engaged in class discussion compared with girls. In this instance eight boys spoke more than once (44% of the 18 boys) compared with only

two girls (16% of the 12 girls). In other words, boys proportionately offered well over twice as many contributions as girls.

Conceptions of racism and the quest for moral 'balance'

Throughout the discussion it is possible to see Alan Parsons setting up the direction and parameters of the discussion. It should be borne in mind that not only was he having to respond quickly 'on his feet' but that his questions would also have been influenced by what he perceived as my particular focus. Had he been teaching the book in a context other than the project, his line of questioning may well have been different. Nevertheless the transcript is instructive. Following Alan's opening question about Buddy's reaction at entering the Satellite Club and Paul relating Buddy's feelings of uneasiness to himself entering a Youth Club, a further probe by Alan led to two students raising the black/white dimension from their white perspective. While Graham spoke about the Youth Club being a "very very strange environment" and that it would have been easier for Buddy to go into a white Youth Club, John openly acknowledged

"If it was me I don't think I would have even tried to go in there... I'd feel too out of place and all these black people looking at you and people staring--- [inaudible] I'd be frightened what to say."

The only person to contest this openly was Donald with the explicit value statement "I don't believe you know I don't think there's any difference between whites and blacks apart from their colour". He was immediately challenged by Graham to recognise that there were people who thought differently. However the teacher's intervention moved the focus back to the text. Once the black boy Dennis had been mentioned, Alan Parsons sustained the focus on him and his hostility to Buddy for the rest of the discussion. After eliciting that there had been "hatred" in Dennis' eyes, Alan further reinforced it with his question "Did that strike you that word?":

A.P.: What does it actually state in the text.. that's in his eyes?

VOICES: Hatred.

A.P.: Did that strike you that word?

VOICES: Yeah.

A.P.: How does Julius account for that?... Marion.

MARION: He'd had some trouble with some white kids at school.

A.P.: He'd had some trouble with some white kids at school.. and how does Buddy reply to that? It's quite a sharp reply actually.. Neil.

NEIL: So did I.

A.P.: So did I. Will Julius accept the parallel?
(Murmurs 'No'. Long pause)

...
IAN: Julius will but his friends won't.

By adding "It's quite a sharp reply actually", the teacher was (no doubt unwittingly) prematurely endorsing Buddy's perception that his own trouble at school was the equivalent to that of Dennis, before the students had explored the issue themselves. It is not possible to deduce whether the long pause was the result of difficulty with the way the question had been phrased in an abstract way (a tendency of Alan's) or whether the pause was indicative of a problem in formulating their own responses. Ian's reply indicates his desire to separate out Julius, a character he could assimilate, from Julius' black friends - undefined and presumably threatening.

A few reading journal responses indicated strong sympathy for Buddy's point, for instance:

"...the boy talking to Julius had a bad time in school with white kids and took it out on Buddy just because he's white it doesn't mean to say everybody's the same as that." (Louise)

"Julius' friend Dennis shouldn't have judged Buddy by his appearance just because he was white and Dennis had got hassle from some white kids. Buddy was feeling awkward going into that youth club I don't think I would but other people probably would... I don't see why Buddy's sort of hassling was different to Dennis' I mean they were both hassled about there appearance from white kids." (Alison)

These responses, both from girls with low Racist Perception Scale scores, indicate a lack of understanding of the power dimension to racism and the fact that it is a life-long ongoing experience, as well as the limitations of perceiving racism purely as being about attitudes on a personal level.

This indeed appeared to be part of the teacher's frame of reference as well, preventing him from seeing what the tenacious student Philip was getting at by distinguishing a difference in white and black name-calling. Instead of being able to help clarify the broader social implications, Alan Parsons' response blocked Philip's line of enquiry:

PHILIP: Well it's not so bad you know say if I have trouble with a white but if blacks have trouble with whites and whites have trouble with blacks it's different... if a black has trouble with whites there's all different names that white people call blacks.

A.P.: Somebody could name names that white kids call white kids!

PHILIP: Yeah, but you can't call names that white kids call black kids you can't call a white kid that.

The distinction which Philip was trying to make was one which needed to be explored further in order for students to discover how racist name-calling fits into a wider network of racism and discrimination through the society. They needed to consider how there would have been the possibility at least of a change in the circumstances and features which led to Buddy being called "Dustman". This would not have been the case for Dennis. He would still remain black and subject to racism. While the students might still have retained their sympathy for Buddy in feeling himself an unfair personal target for Dennis' hostility, they needed also to develop an understanding of Dennis' position and some conception of structural racism. Instead however the teacher blocked discussion on the issue, reinforcing a narrow focus on Dennis at a personal level by insisting on the question "What's your attitude towards Dennis...?" Marion and Jacky both offered replies which continued to be concerned with the process behind Dennis' response:

MARION: Him being black. He thought it was I suppose being racist but when the white kids have an argument they wouldn't think that---

A.P.: Jacky?

JACKY: He kind of thinks that all white kids will be against him as well.

A.P.: Yes, but I was actually asking more directly what's your attitude towards the character Dennis.

JACKY: He kind of thinks that the white kids are the same.

TEACHER: No, I'll ask again. What's your attitude towards Dennis... Ian Pollard.

IAN: Well he's sort of a typical black because they sort of judge you as how they judge their friends and you're a different colour and they think that you make racist remarks about them whatever. They think you're in a sort of gang, who sort of make remarks about them.

TEACHER: So you don't like him?

IAN: No.

TEACHER: Not sympathetic towards him.

While Marion and Jacky's responses were brushed aside, Alan Parsons' question was finally answered by Ian in an explicitly racist and revealing statement. However the teacher made no attempt to elicit any qualification on this response to Dennis, but instead set up the loaded question "Isn't he doing exactly what 3E is doing?" At this point Brian, a new boy who had come from London to the school but who was soon afterwards demoted to the lower band, offered the explanation:

BRIAN: He's probably doing that to Buddy because he's had trouble with white people in the past... He's probably saying he can't trust white people--- [inaudible]

By this time the bell had rung and there was no time to explore Brian's perceptions. It seems unlikely, however, that even if there had been time that the teacher would have followed this route. His final question once again implied that he saw an equation between the racist 3E's behaviour and that of Dennis. In other words, he held a notion of moral balance in which racism and reaction to racism were completely personalised and equated as equally bad.

This marginalising of the broader context of fundamental racist inequality is widespread in the dominant white community. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, the teacher's own narrow construction of racism remained a significant feature over the year. While this clearly placed limitations on broadening the students' conceptions of racism and also affected their perception of black people whose critique and responses were perceived as 'too extreme', it was nevertheless still possible to work within a framework of challenging racism at a personal level - in particular

challenging certain stereotypes. A hotseating session, in which students undertook to be questioned in role as various characters from the novel, underlined the need for this in relation to the black characters. This led to setting up a session with the artist Millie Murray in role as Charmian and her mother. This process of challenging stereotypes in which Millie engaged with the students is described in Chapter Eleven on using drama, subtitled "Can You Really Understand It?".

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESPONSES TO FRIEDRICH - RACISM IN A EUROPEAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Outline of 'Friedrich' and related activities

This novel translated from German and first published in England in 1971 is the first in a trilogy covering the years of the Third Reich. Written in the first person by Hans Peter Richter who was himself in the Nazi Youth, Friedrich is the story of the non-Jewish narrator's relationship with a Jewish boy. The book charts events in the lives of the two boys, born within a week of each other into German families living as tenants in the same house. In the early years Friedrich's Jewish family - the Schneiders - are comparatively well off, while the narrator's father is unemployed - but all that is soon reversed. The story is a powerful one of group pressure, fear and terror in which the narrator's ordinarily decent family are increasingly compromised. With the narrator's account in semi-diary form, the book contains a strong interplay of fiction and reality. The book contains a chronology of significant events focusing on anti-semitic legislation and actions from 1933 to 1945. Each student was given a separate copy of the latter as well as a map of Europe marking the concentration camps.

The major difference for students approaching Friedrich in contrast to Buddy was their lack of knowledge of the context out of which the novel arose. Both in terms of time and place it was out of their experience. Nor had they studied the rise of fascism in history. While my hope was that the novel itself would be the major vehicle for increased understanding, I arranged for the students to view The English Programme's documentary on Friedrich (1984), which included 1930s and 1940s footage as well as interviews with people recalling similar experiences to those in the novel. The students viewed the first half of the programme prior to their own reading (in order not to reveal too much of the story) and the complete programme afterwards.

In my view, the most important means of 'bringing it home' however was a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht (10th November 1938) with a visit and talk by a Jewish couple, Dr and Mrs Engel, who had escaped from Vienna with their two children a couple of months after the Nazi invasion. Preparation for this visit had included reading to the students excerpts from Dr Engel's typewritten autobiography as well as listening to an introductory tape made by him specially for them. I shall discuss this visit in more detail below.

Apart from their journal writing, the students were asked to respond to a number of specific passages from the text (Appendices 6.1, 6.2, 6.3), as well as other prepared items. These included a character sheet, an editorial from the Sunday Express 19th June 1938 (Appendix 6.4) and an illustrated sheet entitled 'Time for Judgement' (Appendix 6.5). The latter, linked to the students being given an opportunity to 'replay' the final scene from the novel, combined with hotseating various characters in role, will also be described more fully later in this chapter.

The students were introduced to three related poems during the reading of Friedrich: 'Riot Area' by J.H. Chaplin (Appendix 6.7), 'The Experiment' by Laurence Lerner (Appendix 6.8) and 'First They Came For The Jews' by Pastor Niemöller (Appendix 6.6). Responses were gathered through jottings around the text or through tapes (a mixture of class, group and individual recordings).

Alan Parsons' drama sessions focused on the theme of 'outsiders' and intolerance. Richard Finch, Director of the Fareham and Gosport Drama Centre, led two workshops - the first during the autumn term on 'The Outsider' theme, leading directly into recreating scenes from Friedrich, and the second on the theme of survival. The latter took place in the spring term at the Drama Centre and was linked with a visit to

the Anne Frank exhibition. The students watched two videos in preparation for this second workshop: 'Through Our Eyes - Children Witness The Holocaust' (Tatelbaum, 1985) and 'Just A Diary' (Anne Frank Centre, 1985).¹

Towards the end of the novel I asked Brother Michael if he would speak with the students on the question of Christian involvement in the Holocaust. The session took the form of a class discussion on Friedrich and a sheet documenting anti-semitism entitled 'What are the roots of this?' (Appendix 6.9)

Commemoration of Kristallnacht: living history

While assessing the impact of these various inputs is extremely difficult, in particular any long-term impact, my own perception was that the visit of Dr and Mrs Engels to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom was of an emotional quality which might not be so easily forgotten. A number of the students referred in their journals to the occasion having been a moving one and had been aware that the occasion was an emotional one for the visitors. Many of them noted that there seemed to be areas of experience on which Mrs Engel did not wish her husband to dwell, hurrying him on by saying there were many other questions to answer. The couple had been strongly affected by being asked into a Catholic school and before accepting the invitation had wanted assurance that they were indeed welcome by the school authority. They clearly recalled the complicity of the Catholic Church in the rise of fascism. On the day of the visit, national newspapers carried a report of a historic meeting between the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hume of the Catholic Church, and the Chief Rabbi Lord Jacobovitz,

¹ I had hoped to show the students at least a video which could introduce them to the issue of Palestinians who lost their homeland through creation of the state of Israel. However this proved not to be possible given the time constraints. There was also the possibility of a visit from a priest working in The West Bank, but unfortunately this did not materialise.

in which both the Archbishop and Cardinal acknowledged Christian responsibility in the Holocaust. Dr Engel carried a news-cutting of the meeting in his pocket. The talk was attended by the headteacher, who afterwards invited the couple to return to the school to address sixth formers.

In the lesson on the following day Alan Parsons acknowledged to the students that it had been the most moving talk by visitors that he had experienced in school. After a brief discussion as well as looking at some pencil drawings by Dr Engel (reflecting that period in their lives), the students were then asked to respond by each writing a poem or prayer, subsequently compiled into a book and sent to the couple. In reply the class received a letter from the Engels saying how much they appreciated "the response to these tragic events and it gives us the hope that in the present new generation the seed for an upright and brave attitude will shape a better future for all mankind."

Many of the students had initially responded without enthusiasm to the cover of Friedrich (a swastika imposed over a star of David), although the response was somewhat modified in some cases after reading the back-jacket information. The girls in particular tended to have a negative response, half of them identifying it as a boy's book or 'yet another' book about a boy. While there were indications that some of the predictions of 'boring' were being dispelled after the first few chapters, nevertheless it would seem that the visitors brought the book alive in a profound way for some students. For instance, Alison's initial response was that the book "doesn't look very interesting... if I saw this book in a shop window I doubt I'd go in and buy it." After the first three chapters she still wrote "nothing wants to make me read on." Her next entry however reflects her response to the visit of Dr and Mrs Engel:

"At first I thought it would be boring and I'd probably fall asleep, but I found it very interesting... There were some questions that Mrs Engel didn't want to discuss

maybe because they bought back bad memories, others she gave very short answers to, or rushed her husband on not because they wanted to answer as many questions as they could, but because it was probably a personal thing or a subject to close to her heart. They got emotional and their answers moved me deeply... I've changed my mind about the book especially when we heard what Dr Engel and his wife had to say."

A number of students commented that they wished the session had been longer. Carl noted that he had not realised before listening to Dr Engel that the persecution of Jews had a long history, while Simon commented that he "didn't realise how bad it was" and Justin that it was "incredible... it gave me a whole new meaning to the war." Michael's most pointed journal comment was written not immediately afterwards, but in his end of term review:

"In the work there was a part that would always keep in my mind for the rest of my life and that was the Engel visit... It was such a shame when the bell went because I could of listened to him for hours."

Moral dilemmas: what to do about the Rabbi?

Questions of individual responsibility underpin the book and were central to many of the passages to which the students were asked to respond. In the passages from the chapter 'Grandfather' (revealing the Grandfather's anti-semitism) and 'The Way to School' (showing the boycott of Jewish shops) I was interested to see if, and how, students would comment on the implicit moral issues. The third passage was drawn from 'The Rabbi'. In this chapter, three years after the death of Friedrich's mother in the pogrom, Friedrich and his father are continuing to eke out their threatened existence in the same house as the narrator. When the narrator however discovers a Rabbi hiding with them, the old man says that his fate lies in the narrator's hands. Here I decided to direct the students' focus far more sharply by asking the students how they would each advise the narrator. After completing their response sheets, they then discussed the issues in small groups. I was not interested simply in the final decisions they came to as hypothetical advisers to the narrator, but more in the basis

on which they arrived at that position - the values, assumptions and perceptions underlying their judgement.

As could be expected, few students found the decision clear-cut. Many presented arguments in both directions before deciding on their advice. In their written responses a third leant towards giving the rabbi up to the authorities, with varying degrees of compunction, while more than half of the class leant towards advising the narrator not to report the rabbi. A number of the latter however changed positions during the group discussions. The major deterrent against informing on the rabbi appeared to be a strong feeling about living with guilt. Peter's response for instance reflected considerable conflict:

"..I don't want to spend the rest of my life in a concentration camp. But I would never forgive myself if they were all tortured. The thought of myself being tortured and the Jews free would make me happy, because I would give my life to save them."

Although the last sentence suggests a somewhat idealised picture of self-sacrifice, the statement "But I would never forgive myself..." conveys authentic sentiment, confirmed afterwards in group discussion (see below). Like Peter, Angela placed herself directly in the narrator's position. She spelt out her dilemma clearly:

"My feelings towards such a decision would be very mixed, because even though I would not know the Rabbi I would have to put myself in his position to see his point of view. Then, what about myself, my parents I would be endangering them to save a stranger who might get caught anyway.. I wouldn't know what to do but I'd probably make a rash decision and wait for the outcome. Would I regret it, can I trust these people? Yes, thinking now I would probably let the Rabbi stay, all our lives would be in danger but I would know that if I died I would die knowing that I might of helped save the life of another man."

While counterposing saving a stranger with endangering her own family, she nevertheless considered it fundamental "to put myself in his position to see his point of view". This suggests belief in an intrinsic equality amongst human beings - that even a stranger was entitled to have his point of view

considered. Within this frame of reference, her own family appeared not to have an automatic right to survive at the expense of others. She reconciled herself to things going wrong through re-affirming the value of saving another human being's life. This sentiment was closely echoed by Caroline. Turning the rabbi away would induce "deep guilt", while the compensation for being caught protecting the rabbi would be the knowledge of having "helped and saved someone". Nevertheless Caroline commented that "The rabbi is putting a great burden on the narrator".

While Alison appeared to feel some resentment towards the rabbi for "causing a lot of trouble" and for putting the narrator "in a very awkward situation, pressurising him", she too expressed the rabbi's entitlement as a fellow human being:

"The Rabbi might be a stranger, but that wouldn't give me the right to throw him out into a country where he will suffer."

She was conscious too that the narrator was "a bit young to tell an old man to get out of a place he doesn't even own". In other words, her belief in a fundamental respect of youth for age appeared to take precedence over the narrator using his potential power as Gentile over Jew. However Alison still sought a solution in which the danger was removed elsewhere:

"If the narrator said nothing that would be causing danger for everyone including himself... I would tell the Rabbi politely that he is endangering many lives, and ask whether he has other friends he can stay with."

Alison's criticism that the rabbi was "pressurising" the narrator suggests she did not fully grasp the extent to which the rabbi himself was a victim, and not a willing agent, of pressure. This was certainly the case with Gaby's response. While conscience dictated the rabbi should be helped, Gaby felt

"the Rabbi should have not given the narrator such a task or given him an ultimate decision... My feelings would maybe sometimes be of hatred towards the Rabbi to do such a thing and also of bravery of having saved somebody's lives through a promise."

The rabbi appeared to have become the scapegoat for an anger more appropriately directed at the Nazi instigators of the terror. In discussion both Gaby and her friend Jacky revised their written decisions not to inform on the rabbi. Following Jacky's assertion that the Nazis were bound to find them and "so it might be better for them if you told", Gaby followed suit. While the boys in the group, Donald, Graham and Tony began by defending the rabbi, by the end of the discussion, only Donald seemed unshaken in his position.

A student whose views were absolutely unflinching and fundamentally opposed to informing on the rabbi, was the Italian student Marco. While in discussion his friends Michael and Greg, as well as Louise - the only girl in the group - posed the question of loyalty towards his own family, Marco remained adamant that the central issue was about "a person's life":

"If the Rabbi is found out well there you are. You can't turn him away just like that. It would be inhuman, even if you are endangering other people's lives."

Amongst those who acknowledged from their first response that they would probably give the rabbi up, a couple expressed guilt, but most were concerned with presenting their reasons. The most common was that of protecting one's family. An additional justification for Andrew, however, was that the rabbi was "old and wrinckled". Andrew, who had lived in South Africa for seven years, was sensitive to racist connotations on black/white issues and often appeared to attempt a 'cover up' of his own feelings when he sensed these might not be appropriate. For instance he would sometimes make an obviously 'moralist' statement. At other times he would be slightly 'jokey', so if necessary he could perhaps disengage himself from responsibility by the claim 'I was only joking'. In his written response to the rabbi issue, he considered the likelihood of torture and made a distinction between helping the Schneiders ("my friends") and the rabbi:

"I wouldn't endanger myself just for a stranger because I don't even know what he is like."

When challenged in discussion to consider the consequences for the rabbi, he descended to giggling:

SIMON: Would you say that you would keep the secret or not?

CARL: I'd say I'd keep it.. because otherwise if he had to get moved on... to the next place he could get killed on the way or something.

SIMON: You actually have got a choice in the matter, in keeping the secret or not.

ANDREW: Yeah but..the Rabbi was old and um.. I wouldn't endanger my life for just an old person like him! (giggling).... he's a Rabbi! Cause I don't like him! (giggle) Cause he's a Jew! (giggle)

Of the nine students saying they would inform, only two were girls and one of these - Tanya - changed her position in discussion, probably as a result of the argument being put in strongly moral terms by her friend Angela. Both Erica and Tanya posed a primary loyalty to family, but nevertheless spoke of guilt. All the seven boys apart from Andrew had scored within the medium high to high range on the Racist Perceptions Survey. While John (the highest scorer on the first survey) seemed to face a problem of guilt and whether he had "the guts" to tell the rabbi to his face to leave, in his written response Ian appeared more concerned about remaining anonymous:

"...I would inform the government but on the quiet so nobody knows it was me. But I would still treat them as a friend but in a disguised manner. The pressure they are under at the moment I think death would relieve them of all the pressure..."

Thus he appeared to absolve himself from guilt by suggesting that death would provide relief from suffering for presumably the Schneiders as well as the rabbi. In his group discussion (with Angela, Tanya, Neil and John) Ian went beyond articulating this rationalisation which was challenged, in particular by Angela. He went on to reveal that he made a fundamental distinction between 'German' and 'Jew':

IAN: ...I think it's better to die because he is under great pressure isn't he?

ANGELA: Who?

IAN: Er.. the Snider whatever his name is Herr-
 ANGELA: No I am talking about the narrator. I think he should let the rabbi stay.
 JOHN: Even though I would have said, I don't think I would have been able to say it straight out because you have to build up a lot of guts to say in front of a man to go somewhere else.
 IAN: But isn't the narrator a German, not a Jew?
 ANGELA: But the whole idea of the argument is not---
 IAN: Yeah but why should he be saving a Jew when he's a German?
 ANGELA: Because he's good friends with Friedrich.
 TANYA: Yeah.
 NEIL: Yeah, he wouldn't want to grass Friedrich up because they have been friends since..(background interruption) What? Yeah-
 ANGELA: So what do you think... why do you say about the Germans and the Jews?
 IAN: Well I don't know um er..
 ANGELA: So Ian hasn't got a comment to back up his-
 IAN: Yes I have right..um I think then (laughter in background) .
 ANGELA: Come on then.
 IAN: I think that he should be defending himself. He shouldn't get himself killed for something for another Jew. Why didn't the Jew save the Jew?
 ANGELA: That's what they are trying to do. He didn't find out about it until then. They are trying to save him, the Jewish family are. I don't think you can back that up really Ian. What are your feelings about that? Tanya can't talk!
 TANYA: Well I think he should let the rabbi stay.

It was not surprising that Ian suggested in his journal that "it would of been better if you let Angela compete against somebody who will overpower her". He was indeed forced to the point where he expressed his basic construct of a fundamental difference between Germans and Jews. As already indicated by some of Ian's responses during Buddy, he held deeply embedded notions of difference and what constitutes normality.

Language and power

The use of the words 'German' and 'Jew' as referring to contrasting categories of people was questioned on one occasion by the teacher, but nevertheless this use remained fairly widespread amongst the students. Far more time would have been required to develop an awareness of the use of language in embodying and perpetuating notions of difference and to raise questions about the links between language,

status and power. During the reading of Friedrich, Alan Parsons undertook a brief activity in which the students listed all the 'nicknames' they knew relating to groups of people. They were also asked to write the contexts in which they had either heard these words used, or possibly used them themselves. The combined lists consisted of 121 different names, almost all of them clearly derogatory. This activity was followed by a class discussion in which the teacher attempted to lead the students towards viewing name-calling as a process of dehumanisation and reduction of others. However it was questionable whether the didactic question-and-answer form of the lesson encouraged the students to begin their own meaningful exploration of the issues - especially in relation to their own feelings and language use. Even students like Angela and Neil at times used the term "the Jew" to refer to the rabbi - unconscious perhaps of its depersonalising effect. The extract above gives an example of Ian's extremely casual and dismissive approach to naming certain people: "Er.. the Snider whatever his name is Herr-". Conscious or unconscious, the effect is to belittle the owner of the name. My feeling with Ian was that the effect was frequently calculated.

Public and private spaces for response

Ian was not the only student who said he would have given the rabbi away anonymously. Terry was likewise concerned to distance himself from any danger. He quite openly stated his only ethic as that of self-preservation:

"...I would tell the nazis but not myself. I would send them a letter just incase they arrested me thinking I've known all along. The reason I would tell is because I wouldn't be so stupid as to risk my neck for the sake of a stranger and a jew that I don't even know the name of."

As an afterthought he mentioned that if he got to know the rabbi and liked him, he "might have second thoughts". Nevertheless in his discussion group Terry maintained a straightforward "chuck him out" position. The more other students asked him to consider the consequences, the more he appeared to thrive on establishing his 'hard man' image:

PETER: How would they live on the streets then Terry?
TERRY: Well no that's it! That's his problem!
ALISON: But the Germans are coming round..
PAUL: Don't you feel any sympathy for him if he had to go to concentration camp and all that?
TERRY: He's a stranger. I don't know him.
ALISON: Yeah but it doesn't matter! It doesn't matter if he is a stranger!
PAUL: I bet his face would look really sad.
ALISON: So what if he is a Jew?
TERRY (chanting): Chuck him out!

While Terry's response appeared to contain a marked element of playing to the audience, in his journal he appeared to allow himself the occasional comment reflecting more sensitive emotions - although it is of course possible that he was simply writing what he thought would be appropriate. For instance at the end of the novel, he wrote about Friedrich "I thought it was sad that he died at such a young age and I thought Herr Resch should of felt really guilty." Terry's responses tended to remain at a fairly crude, limited level and he didn't appear at all disconcerted about contradictions. For instance in relation to the pogrom (when the narrator himself became involved in smashing up the Jewish home for apprentices) he wrote:

"It was funny when he got his hammer and started being destructive with it but it was pretty sad about what happened in the Snieders house and Friedrich and his mum and dad."

Terry seemed unable to make any link between what he found "funny" and what he found "sad". In contrast, at least six other boys admitted in their journals to identifying in some way with the narrator and the pleasure of taking part in the violence, but seemed to have some self-awareness of the implications. Like the narrator on returning to see the destruction of Friedrich's home, it seems that they were forced to look, albeit briefly, at themselves. Paul recorded his response to the pogrom with considerable honesty:

"Unbelievable. This shook my bones. I nearly found myself chanting with the book. Towards the end, when Hans was smashing everything up, I to found pleasure of seeing and smashing glass. This was because there was no-one in the world to stop (you) him. It was even more disturbing

reading that Frau Schneider had been killed. I can't put into words the sadness I felt because it took me by surprise so much."

Paul's slip into the pronoun "you", subsequently corrected to "him", reinforces all he was saying and reveals that even as he was writing, his sense of identification with the narrator was intense. A passage such as this indicates the tremendous value of the reading journal and the more private² space it provided for personal exploration and reflection. At the end of the first term Tanya wrote in hers: "These journals have been a god-send (I've managed to stay sane by writing in these)." Even for a student with what appeared a very limited range of responses like Terry, it was possible to see him at least use the term "sad" within the privacy of his journal, while in public discussion he consistently sought to maintain the 'macho' stance of indifference.

Throughout the year I was conscious of the difficulty in trying to offer the students space to articulate and explore their own responses honestly while at the same time presenting challenges to racist thinking in ways that would not provoke either simply defensive reactions or result in the students just giving what they thought was required i.e. a 'correct' response. The issue is of central importance and is one which will be revisited in chapters that follow.

Moral dilemmas: 'Time for Judgement'

In a number of the response sheets the students were left to determine their own focus in making their jottings around the text. However with both the extract taken from the chapter 'The Rabbi' (Appendix 6.3) and in the subsequent 'Time for Judgement' (Appendix 6.5), the students' attention was sharply focused on particular moral issues. In both they were required to make decisions and in the latter indeed to judge the narrator's parents. As with responses concerning the rabbi, I

² This conception of the journals as providing an element of privacy is clearly relative, given that the students knew it would be read by at least myself and their teacher.

was as interested in the basis on which judgements were formed as the decision itself. I had no wish to encourage the students to become simplistically judgemental.

The 'Time for Judgement' session was presented as a follow-up to Richard Finch's drama workshop and took place in the final week of term after the students had completed reading Friedrich. Unfortunately only twenty-one of the thirty students were present. They were taken into the theatre for a double period and initially asked to re-enact the final scene 'In The Shelter'. In this penultimate chapter, the narrator's family have left Friedrich hiding in their flat while they respond to an air-raid warning to go to the communal shelter. Although the narrator's mother had wanted to take Friedrich with them, his father had said it would be impossible as Herr Resch, their landlord and official warden, would have him imprisoned. As the bombing gets worse there is a sudden pounding on the door and a terrified Friedrich begs to be let in. Despite pleas from many in the shelter not to turn the boy away, Resch refuses and threatens to report anyone who persists in contradicting him. The final chapter records how, when the raid is over, Friedrich is found dead on the steps outside the house.

After first re-enacting the text as it stood, the students were asked to replay the scene, but this time Alan Parsons imaginatively suggested that they could change events if they wished, in any way they felt feasible. This led to a version in which the narrator's father (played by John) physically confronted Herr Resch (played by Donald). The father backed down, however, when Resch pulled out a gun and Friedrich remained excluded from the shelter. This re-enactment was followed by the narrator's mother (Alison) and his father (John) each being hotseated by the class and the teacher. Questions revolved around why the father had joined the Nazi Party, whether both parents felt they had done enough for

Friedrich and his family, whether they blamed themselves at all, and what they thought of Herr Resch.

The hotseating was followed by a 'sociogramming' exercise in which John was asked to stand on a chair in a central position, representing the narrator's father, while the other students were asked to stand near or far away from him to demonstrate the degree of sympathy each personally felt for him. The exercise was then repeated with Alison representing the narrator's mother. On both occasions Donald remained the furthest away, indicating uncompromising criticism. While the majority of students started close in to the narrator's father (no doubt indicating a degree of peer group conformity as well as sympathy), there was some shifting outwards to a moderately critical position. However with the narrator's mother in the centre, there was a perceptible move inwards.

Finally the students were given the 'Time for Judgement' sheets (Appendix 6.5). These consisted of a couple of questions to consider about individual ability to resist group pressure and the issue of putting the comfort and safety of one's own family first before responding to the persecution of others. The students were asked to imagine the narrator's parents were on trial and charged with breaking two moral laws from Leviticus:

"Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Everyone was asked first to consider a personal verdict in relation to both parents and to state on what they based their opinion, before deciding in small self-selected groups on a group verdict and giving the reasoning behind that as well.

The boys' responses

With the exception of Donald and partially of Marco (who found the mother guilty of not doing enough for Friedrich) all the boys found both the narrator's father and mother not guilty.

They generally felt that the two of them were not personally against Friedrich and had done everything they could. To have done more would have been to risk their own lives and this was not considered a reasonable option. In other words, they saw pragmatic self-preservation as an acceptable defence. Donald, who in the sociogram had physically distanced himself the furthest from both the narrator's parents, remained a lone dissenter. Commenting on his group's verdict of 'Not Guilty' he wrote:

"I didn't want this. they forced me. I disagreed and wanted both guilty they were both getting income and protection from the nazi party."

It is worth noting that both Donald and Marco involved a parent when subsequently making their taped responses to the Holocaust at home, which in both cases revealed that they had Jewish relations. It also worth recalling that both Donald and Marco firmly took the position of defending the rabbi when others in their group were wavering.

The girls' responses

The responses of the girls provided a sharp contrast to that of the boys, with the majority tending to find both parents guilty. However many of them appeared to have experienced more conflict or uncertainty than the boys in making their personal decisions, judging from the amount of crossing out of original responses. As the students were sitting in groups scattered across the theatre it was not possible to say whether changes to personal responses were made before or after discussion. A few girls also made a distinction between the two laws of Leviticus, and expressed different verdicts accordingly. For instance, Erica and Caroline found the parents guilty on the charge of standing "idly by the blood of thy neighbour" but not guilty with regard to "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Caroline reasoned that they had tried to protect Friedrich but "They couldn't really do anything about it because they were pressured by Herr Resch." Two other girls proposing verdicts of 'not guilty' were Louise and Michelle. Although Louise found the father "slightly guilty because he

joined the party but was still a friend to the Schneiders", she felt the mother should not be blamed. Michelle's 'not guilty' response however, seemed to be based on the father's personal right to join the Nazi party if he wished and the financial pressure for him to do so. Interestingly, Louise and Michelle were the only girls in a mixed group. Their verdicts may possibly have been different had they been in a girls' only group.

Most of the girls were clustered in two discussion groups which appeared to combine around Angela. The conversation recorded on a nearby tape recorder reveals that she was influential at an early stage of the discussion by raising the question of the French Resistance and the possibility of resistance. She also made the point that had Friedrich been their own child, the narrator's parents would not have left him behind in the house. A further point raised by Gaby was that the threat of having their house taken away from them was over-rated as "it might have been bombed down by the time the raid had finished".

My general impression of the responses to the sheet was that most of the students could find strong justification for pragmatic compromise, in terms of preserving personal safety, but that amongst the girls this line of argument was more actively countered by a sense of conscience. The girls also appeared more inclined to explore affective dimensions of the situation in greater depth - hence focusing on protection of a child and considering how a family could actually leave a child behind during a bombing raid.

Perceptions of relevance

Final responses to Friedrich were made in reading journals as well as on tape - either individually or in pairs, over the Christmas holidays. As a framework for making their tapes, students were given a couple of sheets entitled 'The Holocaust' (Appendix 6.6) containing some illustrations,

quotations from Cardinal Hume and the Archbishop of Canterbury on the Christian involvement and responsibility, as well as Pastor Niemöller's poem 'First They Came For The Jews'. Students were asked to imagine they were making a radio programme on 'What a young person today thinks about the Holocaust'. It was suggested they might include responses to some questions and items on the sheet, and that they might also wish to interview people. While the tapes from a few students suggested they had been involved in little more than another exercise, there were others which suggested real involvement. Donald and Marco (the only boys who had laid some blame on the narrator's parents) each interviewed a parent, who spoke about Jewish relatives within the family. Donald's mother was partially of Jewish descent and Marco's step-aunt and uncle had actually escaped from Auschwitz. It seems likely that this family connection may well have affected these students' responses to the novel. Parental interest was most likely also a factor for Michael, the student who commented very strongly on the effect of the visitors commemorating Kristallnacht. In his tape Michael not only spoke of feeling sad, upset and angry but spoke of his father visiting Auschwitz after the war and of "the terrible feeling to stand there". Michael's Polish descent - with a grandfather who came to England at the time of the war (apparently as part of the Polish Resistance) - may well have encouraged his sense of the book's relevance. In his journal he wrote that the book

"made me feel and appreciate my own freedom in some parts it was so realistik, it made me angry at some of the comments made by certain people in the book. Friedrich the book hasn't really taught me much because I've seen quiet alot of concentration camp tipe films and I find all of them are very disturbing... I could relate to Friedrich."

It seems Michael equated knowledge with 'facts' and he did not seem to credit as 'knowledge' his own experience of the text - which judging from his journal was often intense.

It was not only students who had some form of family basis for personal identification with events of the Holocaust however,

who acknowledged that it had some personal meaning for them. Asked about this wider context rather than more specifically the novel itself, there again seemed to be a rather interesting gender difference. Whereas three-quarters of the boys acknowledged on their tapes that the Holocaust was not totally distant and had some meaning for them, only a third of the girls said they felt it meant something to them today. Yet some of these girls had offered sensitive commentaries while reading Friedrich. This is not an area I investigated but it raises the question of whether these girls saw the wider subject of 'The Holocaust' as part of a political and male-dominated domain to which they felt they had little connection. In addition the stimulus sheet which formed the basis of their taped responses contained quotations only from men (The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hume and Pastor Niemoeller). The illustrations also reflected a slight male bias although the most striking was probably that of a young girl wearing a star of David. In their initial responses to the cover of the book the majority of girls had identified it unenthusiastically as a "boy's book" or about war (e.g. Julia: "Oh no! a war story - how boring."). Although this initial reaction appeared to be somewhat dispelled, judging by the quality of involvement in responses from those same girls in their journals, nevertheless it appeared from final journal comments to have been enjoyed by a notably greater proportion of boys than girls. It was, however, difficult to know to what extent Angela's response, for instance, was largely a reaction against the fact that all the books they had previously been asked to read in St Benedict's had featured male central characters:

"Interesting and informative but I still didn't enjoy the book, it was too repetitive and I don't think it gave enough information about the persecution of the jews. It was too much based on a boys life from the view of another...I think we should have a book based on a girls life or feeling or opinions about society... I have enjoyed this term... The english lessons we have had have been the most interesting since I came to this school."

The apparent contradictions (enjoying the lessons but not the book) possibly derive from Angela's desire to make a strong statement about gender bias in the books they had read. However a number of other students, male and female, also commented on the novel being repetitive and at times "a list of events" (e.g. Jacky, Peter). Alison's final journal comment was that

"...the subject, that is the Jews, was very interesting to read about, but the book was simple and repeated itself many times. I would like to find out more information about the Jews..."

Perhaps these comments indicate a response to Richter's spare, emotionally contained style - the simplicity of which is deceptive. Even with the boys, amongst whom the book was largely popular with only one exception, a number had referred to it being repetitive at times. Such comments suggest a tendency to reduce the novel to a cognitive message. Given time, it would have been useful to encourage students to explore Richter's style and help counter the notion that the author was involved in a 'simple' exercise of conveying the knowledge of 'facts'.

Evidence for the importance of students having different spaces and contexts in which to develop responses is provided by the dialogues in which both Angela and Alison engaged when making their tapes, each with a close friend. These took place after their end-of-term reviews on Friedrich where the context had tended to encourage them to formulate and finalise their individual judgements on the book. Angela chose to make her tape with Tanya, who had also commented in her review that the novel was, with the exception of some chapters, repetitive and boring. The most striking feature of their taped conversation, however, was the degree to which they related issues of exclusion, identity and injustice to their own lives while referring into the text, as well as drawing on other experiences from the term such as a drama session and Buddy. It seems probable that privacy was an important factor in

enabling the discussion to move into sensitive areas of personal identity. Each described to the other an incident when she had felt 'put down'. Angela's was an occasion when someone had identified her as Irish and therefore "thick":

ANGELA: I think that everybody should be proud of what they are.. I don't think it's.. I don't think the idea of living in a society with different races and cultures is that you become a different race or a different culture yourself (TANYA: Yeah) you just stay an individual.. and think that you should.. you should stick up for other people.. as an individual and as a group (TANYA: Yeah, yeah) and um.. like if you were Jewish.. (TANYA: Mmm) actually I don't know what I would do if you were Jewish if.. if it was back then..

TANYA: Yeah, yeah it's quite hard isn't it?

ANGELA: It's quite hard to think.. Yeah.. you are put under a lot of pressure.. and sometimes you can't tell your parents what's going on. (TANYA: Yeah) You feel really distant to them. Something happens to you and it.. you think it's their fault because.. like if my parents were Chinese and I was born in this country and people started taking the mick out of me I would think it was their fault.

TANYA: Oh yes that's what we've done in that other drama lesson isn't it with Mr. Parsons.. with those um.. those two kids.. I can't remember the names.. what was it? Jesuit that's it.

ANGELA: Oh the Scavvies.

TANYA: Mm.. yeah.

ANGELA: Yeah they were called nicknames, the Scavs or something.. (pause) I wouldn't know what to do! I wouldn't.. if we were split up! It has never happened to me that seriously. I think that was the only time (TANYA: Mmm) and I felt really hurt then... [referring to the incident when she had been called "thick"] That's why I try not to bring up.. I don't know why I'm.. I'm proud that I'm Irish but I try not bring up the fact that I am (TANYA: Mmm) unless somebody says something about them that offends.. me and my.. my country I suppose.

TANYA: Yeah.. yeah but I.. I don't know.. I probably wouldn't stick up for anything English.. it it's difficult cause you're in an English country.. cause you are not in Ireland any more either (ANGELA: No) so.. um.. cause you're in England and everybody else is in England.. cause if I went over to Ireland I probably would stick up for the English.

ANGELA (sounding a little surprised): Stick up for the English?

TANYA: Yeah.

ANGELA: The Irish.. well I don't think they'd say anything anyway.

TANYA: No no I doubt if they would.

ANGELA: They're not like that.

The transcript suggests an active involvement with Friedrich. Angela, having made a statement on the right of individuals to maintain different cultural identities, suddenly challenged herself to consider her response had she and Tanya found themselves in the context of the novel with Tanya being Jewish. There were no easy answers and the discussion moved on to the pressures to conform and the high price of non-conformity. Angela indicated her own strategy of not calling attention to being Irish - essentially a strategy of assimilation - unless she felt her personal or cultural pride were at stake. She would no doubt have found it hard to define the criteria for this. As mentioned previously, on one occasion she was part of a small group of students who unwittingly recorded themselves engaging in a racist joking session during their drama session on the theme of intolerance. Initiated by Ian - very likely to subvert the theme of the lesson - Angela actually contributed an anti-Irish piece on 'talking backwards' (Chapter 12: 299, Footnote 2).

As in group situations Angela was the dominant contributor, tending to direct the discussion with Tanya, often by asking probing questions about how Tanya would have responded. For instance, she wanted to know how Tanya would have felt if she had been a child in Friedrich's class when he was excluded:

ANGELA: If you were in that class what would you have done?

TANYA: What would I have done? Um.. (said forcefully as if stuck) There's not a lot I.. I don't know! There's not a lot you could do is there? Cause you've no authority isn't it? The teacher and that..

ANGELA: What if you were.. if you were that Jewish child and nobody said anything to you.. (TANYA: Mmm..) Supposing, I know, the teacher didn't insult him, but supposing the teacher subtly insulted his culture or whatever, and you were the Jewish child and nobody stuck up for you, how would you feel?

TANYA: Really hurt.. really hurt that nobody stuck up for me.

ANGELA: And yet you've just said that you wouldn't have stuck up for him.. so aren't you really criticising.. um contradicting yourself?

TANYA: Yeah! (embarrassed laugh),

ANGELA: So why do you think that is? Do you think it's..
Do you think it.. I I think.. Well do you think that it
would be.. um.. it's not.. it's harder to stick up for
someone than it is to want someone to stick up for you?
TANYA: Yeah.. yeah.

This extract not only indicates Angela's powerful ability to probe, but I have quoted it without abbreviation to show how she herself was attempting to sort out some of her own thoughts in the process and to make sense of the moral/pragmatic contradictions she no doubt experienced herself. Although Angela took the lead throughout, Tanya was an active listener.

Another pair whose taped discussion was particularly interesting was Alison and Erica. Having begun by struggling with the meaning of Cardinal Hume's statement that we need to resist the first signs of injustice and violence, both acknowledged that the Holocaust seemed distant to them. However they continued to grapple with trying to understand items on the sheet and to enquire about each other's responses. In the process they began to refer to incidents in the text, offering their interpretations and considering what might have been their own responses. This led to them reading the chronology of events listed at the back of the book. While Erica would have easily side-tracked, giggling at times at things she thought "silly", Alison's involvement and growing indignation continued to focus the discussion - as if she was trying to take in properly the implications of the vast array of anti-semitic legislation. The discussion was ended abruptly by the half-hour tape clicking off, at a point where it appeared Alison was about to reflect on what she had gained from the novel:

ALISON: It's a good thing that this book came out
actually because um..
ERICA: Because I mean it-
ALISON: Because it tells um.. it tells younger people
about it.
ERICA: It's a good story really.. about one boy.. how he
gets through it..
ALISON: Yeah.. it it does tell people about it.
ERICA: Yeah but I think there should be.. I mean..
ALISON: No but it tells you-

ERICA: The author.. in here has mixed hasn't he? He's put.. sort of.. factual things and then fiction.

ALISON: Yeah but I think it tells younger people about what happened if they don't know already-

ERICA: In a more.. in an easier way..

ALISON: I mean I've learnt more really.. from the book-
(Tape clicks - whispered giggles - END)

Erica had begun to raise here the issues of fact and fiction. Whether she would have wished to revise her final journal comment, that "it was a good book, but not one I would choose for myself", is open to question. But had Alison had this discussion prior to writing her final commentary, she may possibly have reconsidered the distinction she made between the book (which she said was "simple and repeated itself many times") and "the subject, that is the Jews" which she found interesting. For instance, her own admission of difficulty in comprehending the scale of the Holocaust may perhaps have led her to reflect on a connection between Richter's simplicity of style and the enormity of the experience about which he was writing.

It could be argued that Friedrich might be more productively read with students older than thirteen, in order to explore more fully the affective as well as cognitive dimensions - and the mode of writing. Certainly it presented a considerably greater challenge than Buddy. Caroline, for instance, raised the question of age:

"I thought that the book would have been better and I would understand it more if I had read it in a few years time.. It would mean more to me. The work that was set to do with Friedrich was good and I think I understood it better and could get into it when there was drama or t.v. programmes as a follow up... If a girl was in the same situation as Friedrich I wonder if her views would have been the same."

This gender question may have been stimulated by the interviews conducted with the girls shortly beforehand and was yet another reflection of the desire amongst the girls for a reflection of female experience in their class literature. On the other hand, the male hero had not proved a total deterrent to Hannah whose initial response had been "Oh no, another male 'heroic story'". :

"This book was more moving than Buddy was... I was proved wrong as at first I thought it was going to be very boring."

A number of students, girls and boys, noted having learnt something. For instance, Julia wrote:

"I have learnt that there were things I didn't know about jews, even though I thought I did as I have a friend who is a jew. I didn't know jews suffered so much and that they were treated so badly."

Julia's awareness of gender also seemed to have heightened following the interviews. She suggested that girls and boys should hold discussions in separate groups so as to be able "to see what differences there are in a way a boy thinks and in a way a girl thinks."

Apart from Michael, whose strong response to Friedrich has already been quoted ("it made me feel and appreciate my own freedom"), a number of other male students recorded it as having made quite a significant impact on them:

"I think Friedrich is one of the best books I have ever read... Before I read the book I found it hard to grasp the idea that all the terror had actually happened but now I can." (Philip)

"I was astonished that this story was true. When I was younger I had no idea what the Nazis did to the Jews but now my dreams are shattered as I read the true story of the Holocaust." (Paul)

"Due to it being a school reader we had to read on but frankly I certainly would not have followed on reading. After reading and completing the whole book I am very pleased that I did so and I thouroly enjoyed the book too. Although I am very interested in this time of history, I learnt some real knowledge about what went on during the second world war... I found the writer used very simple english to some of the books I have read like Machine Gunners etc. Although the book was very interesting I wonder whether he wrote the book for more younger children." (Simon)

"My thoughts and views of the book... have completely changed... it spotlights to me quite a few facts. Mainly that the Jews who died during the time of the Nazi dictatorship were real people and not only facts and figures. The book kept me interested and I did something

I dont normally do with English class readers which is read on." (Carl)

Carl has not only highlighted here the power of literature in bringing home to him that the "the Jews who died... were real people and not only facts and figures" from history but in addition he ended with one extremely pertinent question embedded in another:

"There is only one question which remains in my mind which is, what the subject of the persecution of the Jews has to do with us and why in History matters like this are only skipped over without touching the heart of the matter."

Unless teaching about racism can indeed touch "the heart of the matter" for students, the question 'What has it to do with us?' is likely to persist. It is also salutary to remember that Carl's score on the re-administration of the Racist Perceptions Scale showed the largest single increase for any student in the project class.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RESPONSES TO ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY - THE CHALLENGE OF A BLACK AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

Outline of 'Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry' and related activities

Set during the depression of the 1930s, Mildred Taylor's novel is a powerful evocation of the American south, seen through the eyes of a young black girl, nine-year old Cassie Logan. The only black land-owning family in the area, the Logans are determined to resist pressure from the big white land-owner Harlan Granger to sell their land and become reduced to share-cropping. While Cassie and her three brothers - Stacey, Christopher-John and Little Man - learn the harsh realities of living under white power, they also learn from their family about principles of fundamental human dignity and resistance to injustice. When a neighbouring black family suffers death and permanent injury through a racist attack in which the Wallaces - the white family running the local store - are implicated, Cassie's parents organise a boycott of the Wallaces' shop. They do so with full knowledge of the serious possible consequences for themselves.

In her acceptance speech for the Newbery Medal, quoted in a background booklet (English Centre, 1984) issued to each of the project students, Mildred Taylor speaks of the distortion of her own family's history to which she had been subjected in school and her determination to address that in her novel:

"In Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry I included the teachings of my own childhood, the values and principles by which I and so many other Black children were reared, for I wanted to show a different kind of Black world from the one so often seen. I wanted to show a family united in love and self-respect, and parents, strong and sensitive, attempting to guide their children successfully, without harming their spirits, through the hazardous maze of living in a discriminatory society."

The Logans extend across three generations, with Big Ma (Cassie's grandmother), Papa and Mama each conveying to the children, through memories and stories, a sense of their

history. Two characters outside the Logan family, however, seemed to me to be central to the students' understanding of the novel. The first, T.J., son of a poor black share-cropping family, is the untrustworthy friend of Cassie's older brother Stacey. His desire to be 'someone' leads to a tragic conclusion. Believing he is being offered the superior friendship of two white men (R.W. and Melvin Simms), T.J. becomes involved in a burglary which ends in the Simms' brothers murdering a white shopkeeper and laying the blame on the boy T.J.

The second character only appears occasionally but provides a key counterpoise to T.J. in his relationship with Stacey. He is the white boy Jeremy, younger brother of the Simms, who persists in genuinely wanting to be friends with the Logan children despite being treated with sustained wariness and suspicion. He is furthermore undeterred by being beaten by his father for associating with a black family. I was particularly interested to see how the students would interpret Jeremy's rejection by the Logan children. To what extent would they be able to transcend their own frames of reference and expectations concerning friendship to understand the constraints of the power divide depicted in the novel?

As with Friedrich where the students were not familiar with the historical and social context out of which the novel arose, it seemed essential to give them some idea of the background. As already mentioned, each student was issued with a copy of the English Centre's excellent booklet of background material and ideas for work on the novel. They also viewed an interview with Mildred Taylor (The English Programme, 1988), filmed at her family's home in Mississippi to give a sense of the novel's location. As with Friedrich, the students watched only part of the video initially and in full at the end.

A further means of addressing the students' unfamiliarity with experiences of the novel was to invite Millie Murray for a

workshop, the major part of which was a hotseating session where she took on consecutively the roles of the three generations of female characters. This took place towards the end of reading the novel, a hotseating amongst the students themselves having taken place earlier on.

Apart from their journal writing, students were asked to complete a couple of the assignments from the English Centre booklet (exchanging first impressions of characters and constructing a chart showing links between racism and resistance). Passages selected for specific response focused on the white bus driver's attack on the Logan children and their subsequent response to Jeremy (Appendix 7.1), and on Mama's explanation to Cassie of the connection between racism and slavery (Appendix 7.2). Other tasks included writing a dialogue between Cassie and Jeremy at a point where it was clear that his family were involved in the racist attacks (Appendix 7.3), as well as 'thought-tracking' these two characters i.e. writing their separate inner thoughts. There were a couple of taped group discussions, as well as students being asked to make final taped responses individually or in pairs.

During the term the students were introduced to Langston Hughes' poem 'Mother to Son' (Appendix 7.4) and spent a session developing their own group readings of two poems connected with slavery: John Agard's 'Limbo Dancer's Soundpoem' and Edward Brathwaite's 'Limbo' (Appendix 7.5).

In drama the teacher devised a 'Masters/Slaves' session with the intention of exploring issues of oppression. Other drama activities focused on the students' own experiences of injustice; adult-child as well as sibling relationships linked to power; and questions of status and power in an inter-school conflict.

Initial predictions about the novel

The front cover of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry depicts Cassie in the foreground with one of her brothers, with T.J. being attacked by three white men on the back cover. The brief cover information reveals that the story relates to a young black girl wanting to assert her self-worth and equality in the dangerous environment of Mississippi in the 1930s. Initial responses from the girls were particularly positive (e.g. "great, a girl heroine!" - Tanya). While two-thirds of the boys expressed either positive expectations or were non-committal, a third predicted the book would be boring. John, for instance, identified it as "a girl's book" and Ian said it did not "look over brilliant... it is just like discrimination between whites and blacks". Carl too thought "it will be rather boring and just about a black minority who are being racially harassed... perhaps I may be wrong about the book like I was about the last one." The word "just" suggests both these boys were ready to predict a didactic message which could easily be dismissed as 'boring'. Carl was however prepared to admit his prediction could be wrong, and indeed that proved to be the case for him as with most of the others.

In order to help the students contextualise the novel and assist them in coping with the language, they were shown the first part of the English Programme video, featuring an interview with the writer Mildred Taylor talking about her childhood. A few students recorded strong responses to the film. Andrew had predicted boredom but acknowledged "I was pretty shocked to see what it was like to be black". Paul felt the film "explained a lot about 'Racism'... I'm astonished at just how much courage black people have."

Students' perceptions of the Logans' wariness towards Jeremy

The first response-passage for the students came from Chapter Three where the white bus driver, with a bus-load of white children shouting abuse, deliberately veers towards the group

of black children forcing them into a mud-filled gully. Immediately afterwards Jeremy approaches them with a friendly smile, but gets no response. Only after he leaves them to walk up to the white school, does Cassie realise that Jeremy never travels on the white bus, however bad the weather. The students were asked first to write their thoughts and feelings alongside the passage and then to answer the following questions:

"Where do you feel you are when reading this passage? Are you inside the story with particular characters, or viewing the events as an outside onlooker? Or does your position perhaps change? If so, how?"

Afterwards the students exchanged their papers and commented in writing on their partner's response. Apart from my own interest in learning about the kind of identifications the students were making with the characters, the intention of the task was for the students themselves to become more aware of their perspectives and to reflect on how these were possibly being formed. Had there been time this kind of activity could have been usefully developed to help students reflect more on how texts are constructed by both writer and reader.

At least half the students commented on Jeremy in their responses to the passage, a quarter indicating they felt the Logans should have been friendlier towards him, a sentiment expressed by other students as well elsewhere. For instance, Jacky wrote in her response:

"As the white kids have hurt Stacy he can't really communicate with any other white kids as it hurts and reminds him of what has happened. I think this is a horrible judgement to make, just cause one white kid acts one way that doesn't mean to say all white kids act that way. Cassie suddenly realizes they have done wrong and should not be horrible to Jeremy."

Interestingly, in her analysis of where she felt she was placed when reading, Jacky identified herself as having begun the book as "an outsider, looking in on their 'world' but as the book progresses I was in Cassy's position". Her condemnation of the children's response to Jeremy revealed however her own white perspective predominating at this point.

Her statement "just cause one white kid acts one way that doesn't mean to say all white kids act that way" has turned the circumstances of the text around since it is all the white children except Jeremy who "act that way". Rather than being able to consider what Stacey's "hurt" really felt like - including the full extent of its cause - her response appeared to derive rather from a concern not to be considered racist because of the behaviour of another white person. This also indicates a conception of racism limited to personal behaviour, attitude and relationships. This conception of racism confined to the personal domain, as shall be seen elsewhere, was common throughout the class as well as within the teacher's thinking. It would be difficult to understand the Logans' deep wariness of Jeremy without some understanding of how, despite his admirable personal qualities, Jeremy was nevertheless part of a society structured in terms of power and inequality.

Within the novel, Stacey experiences a real conflict in relation to Jeremy. Had Jeremy been black, he and Stacey would no doubt have been close friends. Instead Stacey is left with T.J. who is not merely untrustworthy but maliciously unscrupulous. Mildred Taylor brings the issue of friendship in a divided and unequal society to a fine focus when Jeremy brings a home-made flute for Stacey and a bag of nuts for the Logan family at Christmas. Not only is he defying convention and possible punishment from his own family, but he is clearly nervous about his reception at the Logans. The children's Uncle Hammer, who has returned on a visit from the North, is openly hostile. After Jeremy has left, Stacey questions his father about the possibility of allowing the friendship to develop. Papa firmly points out, however, that friendship across the colour line is usually not on an equal basis. While Jeremy will grow up to be a man, Stacey will quite probably remain a "boy" to him:

"Maybe one day whites and blacks can be real friends, but right now the country ain't built that way. Now you could be right 'bout Jeremy making a much finer friend than

T.J. ever will be. The trouble is, down here in Mississippi, it costs too much to find out." (p.119)

That night Cassie sees Stacey silently fingering the flute Jeremy had brought him, before carefully placing it in a box of treasured things, from which she never sees him take it out again.

After reading this passage, the students were asked to write responses in their reading journals. While a number of students did not comment on what they personally thought of Papa's advice to Stacey, of those who did the majority felt the friendship should be allowed to develop. One can only speculate on how much this was due to a sense of identity with Jeremy on the basis of colour. Neil, for instance, indicated a real involvement with Jeremy:

"I'm very proud of Jeremy for bringing the nuts and the flute for Stacey. I was half expecting Uncle Hammers reaction to what Stacey told him about Jeremy. However, I don't think Jeremy would be like that in later years."

Neil's use of the word "proud" suggests a strong identification with Jeremy, whose individual actions probably represented as positive a rejection as possible of the 'race' divide for a white child in those circumstances. A number of other students asserted that Jeremy would be different from what Papa predicted. Not only did they conceptualise racism at a purely personal level (i.e. as long as Jeremy was not "racist", friendship should not be a problem), but they appeared to have considerable faith in Jeremy as an individual. Papa was seen as being "a bit harsh" (Andrew), "quite narrow minded" (Angela) and generally judging Jeremy incorrectly: "I feel sorry for Jeremy and I think Papa judges him completely wrong" (Donald).

Dan's defence of Jeremy, however, appeared to extend further, with Papa standing accused not only of misunderstanding Jeremy as an individual but of stereotyping all white people:

"I can understand Papa's feeling towards the Simms but surely he knows that not all white people are bad... If papa knew Jeremy a bit better then he'd see what he was

like and therefore wouldn't worry about Stacey mixing with a few white people."

While Dan's involvement in and grasp of the text often seemed fairly tenuous judging from his journal, Caroline's response gave evidence of real concern about the problem. She too, however, queried whether Papa was not being racist, although acknowledging that "he does have a reason". Perceiving Jeremy as an individual caught between two communities - "he just can't win" - she not only affirmed Jeremy's potential to turn out differently from his father, but proposed that the only way out of the impasse of 'race' conflict is for individuals to break rank:

"I don't think that Jeremy will ever turn on Stacy if they become best friends so I don't see why Uncle Hammer thinks he will turn into a carbon copy of his father. Jeremy is much nicer and kinder than TJ to Stacy... When Papa told Stacy that he didn't really think going around with Jeremy was such a good idea, I would have thought that he would let Stacy become his friend. It sounds as if he is being racist when he says that, although he does have a reason for doing that. Stacy could still go ahead and become Jeremys friend if he thought it was the right thing to do. His father only told him his opinion. If I was Stacy I would go around with Jeremy because I know that Jeremy is kind and would never turn on me. It isn't Jeremy's fault he was born white, he would much rather be black. He dosen't really fit in with either colour but he disagrees with white folk so he turns to the blacks. No body will give him a chance. Papa says to Stacy that one day whites and blacks could be real friends. That will never be until someone starts being friendly to someone else of a different colour they could see that not everyone is out to get one another and then nobody would care wether people were black or white."

While there can be no doubt about the sincerity of Caroline's desire for a moral revolution of individuals, it is also clear that her conception of racism does not extend beyond one of inter-personal hostility.

A small number of students commenting on Papa's advice to Stacey, did however express support for Papa's viewpoint. Of the five students, four seemed to do so on the basis that the relationship with Jeremy could cause Stacey hurt or trouble later. Paul suggested that Papa may have been talking from personal experience: "There is a possibility that when he was

younger he had a good friend in a white boy who turned on him as they got older." Michael noted that "Papa wants to be proved wrong" but nevertheless was "preparing Stacey for the future so when the situation arrives Stacey won't be hurt". For Alison too the decision seemed to be a matter of regret: "I prefer Jeremy to T.J. but when it comes down to friends if I was Stacey I would chose T.J. that way I'd cause no trouble".

Terry's support for Papa seemed, however, to have a different basis, although not obvious from his journal response where he wrote that Papa was "right about Jeremy because when Jeremy is older he might think different about blacks because of different influences of white people so it is not a good idea to get a friend that is white at this point in time." Although correct in his assessment, Terry's tone is rather cold and detached. It was in a taped discussion which turned to the Jeremy/Stacey relationship that his actual racist frame of reference was sharply revealed:

PAUL: Jeremy's got guts to miss the bus.

TERRY: He should hang around with his own kind.

Subsequent comments by Terry on the Logans revealed a distinct lack of sympathy for them. Thus while for the other students who supported Papa's advice, the division between Jeremy and Stacey nevertheless appeared to be a matter for regret, for Terry the issue seemed simply to be that each should keep to "his own kind" - in other words, that each should accept the philosophy of apartheid.

The teacher's response to a black perspective

A brief discussion directed by the teacher followed the journal writing session on the passage about Papa's advice. Employing his directed question and answer technique, Alan Parsons finally elicited the response from a student that Jeremy would always be separated from Stacey through having more power. I had previously expressed to Alan my interest in discovering whether the students would really be able to grasp the power dimension of the relationship and understand the

Logans' perspective on relating to even apparently sympathetic white people. Although the teacher's line of questioning was very probably influenced by what he perceived as my particular interest, the questions he formulated seemed to suggest that he himself did not altogether accept Papa's position:

A.P.: ...Were you shocked by Papa's line?... Were you shocked by that view? (Pause) John?

JOHN: Um there was truth in it somewhere.. but um I think it was a bit harsh to tell a boy.. sort of when he's got friends... he's saying that his friends are all.. could possibly betray him later on in life... I don't think I'd say that sort of thing.

A.P.: You think Papa was being harsh?

JOHN: Yeah. (Bell)

A.P.: Graham?

GRAHAM: I think that's more the sort of thing that Uncle Hammer would have said.. towards whites. I didn't realise that um Papa didn't like whites so much.

A.P.: So you think Papa.. Papa was showing um a slightly less liberal attitude than you would have thought he might earlier on?

GRAHAM: Mm.

PAUL: Maybe Papa had already experienced.. he had a white friend when he was a boy and his friend had turned against him.

A.P.: Possibly.. that would have accounted for it. Right I'm going to leave it there.

While the teacher was constrained by this taking place at the end of the lesson when there was no time to explore adequately the students' responses, his questions appeared nevertheless to be phrased in a way likely to reinforce a closed view of Papa. Rather than asking an open-ended "What were your responses to Papa's advice?" he asked "Were you shocked by Papa's line?" When John replied that he felt Papa was being "a bit harsh", instead of enquiring how this perception could be reconciled with Papa's desire to protect Stacey from future hurt, the teacher simply asked John to confirm "You think Papa was being harsh?" Furthermore when Graham added the comment "I didn't realise that um Papa didn't like whites so much", Alan Parsons did not suggest that they perhaps needed to look at that idea further in another lesson - i.e. examine whether it really was a matter simply of Papa not 'liking whites'. Instead he raised the possibility of Papa being "less liberal" than previously supposed. Although Paul's suggestion that Papa

may have actually had personal experience of rejection by a former white friend was acknowledged, the lesson had to end.

The teacher's line of questioning here (which was not isolated and had indeed been presaged by his questions on the black boy Dennis in Buddy) seemed to me indicative that it was not only the students who had difficulty in being able to imagine and identify with the psychological reality of oppression. While there was a tendency amongst some students to interpret the wariness of black characters towards sympathetic white people as evidence of their fundamentally 'not liking' whites, Alan Parsons appeared to question the Logans' response in terms of fundamental notions of being 'liberal' and presumably 'balanced'.

In the subsequent lesson, a similar issue arose in discussion about the reaction of Papa and Uncle Hammer to the supportive white lawyer Mr Jamison. Hammer appears particularly wary of the lawyer who offers his own money to back the credit required by the black sharecroppers in order to continue boycotting the local white store and buy their goods further afield in Vicksburg. Mr Jamison explains that he does not want to see the Logans lose their land, which would certainly happen if they stood credit for the sharecropping families. Alan Parsons' questions on the passage focused mainly on understanding the lawyer's perspective:

A.P.: He's actually going to offer his own money as surety for the credit that the black families are going to need to do their shopping in Vicksburg as opposed to the Wallaces. What's his motivation for doing that?...

PHILIP: He doesn't like whites any more than they do.

A.P.: No that's not the point. "He doesn't like whites any more than they do". (repeated in dismissive tone)

MARION: He doesn't like what they are doing to the black families.

A.P.: Yes! He feels a sense of injustice.. just as much. Would you say Uncle Hammer's response to him was a bit harsh.. He seems very suspicious. Philip?

PHILIP: Um.. it is a bit yeah.

A.P.: And how does Mr Jamison answer that suspicion?

Here Alan Parsons elicited a distinction between Mr Jamison not disliking white people per se but disliking what they were

doing to black people - the distinction between hating injustice, but not the perpetrators in themselves. It was interesting that the teacher immediately questioned Philip's simple notion of Mr Jamison 'not liking whites' whereas he did not raise this query in relation to similar ideas about Papa. While in the previous lesson he had not queried John's interpretation of Papa as being "a bit harsh" about Jeremy, here he himself suggested to the students - through the use of closed questions - that Uncle Hammer's response to Mr Jamison was "a bit harsh" and "suspicious". It appeared that Alan Parsons - with his desire for a 'balanced' response - found it easier to identify with the white lawyer (whom he perceived as feeling "a sense of injustice.. just as much" as the black recipients) than with either Papa or Uncle Hammer whose actual experience of oppression over many years had led them to be extremely cautious in dealing with white people. While on the one hand the teacher called to the students' attention the Logans' struggle for equality, he appeared limited in his own ability to empathise and understand the psychological reality of that struggle. In my diary at the time I wrote:

"Given the nature of white dominance aren't Uncle Hammer's suspicions justified and isn't it Papa's willingness to trust that deserves the focus and special credit? Again the teacher seems to be applying expectations of behaviour which are appropriate in situations where there is equality but which cannot be assumed to be appropriate where there is inequality."

The limitations in the teacher's own knowledge of black oppression showed up clearly in a class discussion focused on Uncle Hammer's attitude to the First World War (Chapter 6):

A.P.: Why do you think he (Uncle Hammer) has now twice referred to their war?... Wasn't it his as well? (Pause) Peter?

PETER: Well it was the blacks and they fought with the whites but they didn't get anything um from it.. from the war.. all the whites kept it for themselves.

.....

JUSTIN: Did they have any choice about it.. about fighting it? Did they have any control in it? Did they have to do it?

A.P.: Well it was conscription. I mean whites were conscripted the same as the blacks... I presume... So why

do they say their then? They're just identifying themselves to be different from the whites.

PETER: Yeah. No they're.. they're not getting anything from the war.. although they fought in it.

A.P.: Well what makes you think any.. any white person got anything from the war either?... Yeah?

ANGELA: Well it wasn't really their country because they were all taken from Africa.

A.P.: Are you suggesting that somewhere in their.. their minds is the idea that it isn't their country.

ANGELA: Yeah.

A.P.: It's not their home?

ANGELA: It's sort of strange there. They're treated as strangers.. because their ancestry is African.. they don't really think they should fight for..

A.P.: They regard it not as their own country because they're not allowed to regard it as their own country?

ANGELA: Yeah.

CARL: It's because um perhaps he's not proud to have fought in the war... perhaps the whites were.. I don't know..

A.P.: Why do you think there should be that discrimination though? Why should they have a different attitude towards it? I mean if there was conscription then presumably they were conscripted along with everybody else... I'm interested in why he should feel that.. because no white man got any more out of it than any black man did. The blacks were conscripted just the same as the whites.. they entered it on equal terms and they got as little out of it on equal terms.. but he still conceives of it as somebody else's war... Is it because he doesn't actually identify.. feel that he's being allowed to identify as a black with the society in which he lives? Therefore it is somebody else's war.

In this interchange, students were attempting to make connections between Uncle Hammer's attitude and the experience of discrimination. Amongst important questions being raised by the students themselves were those about choice and control. However, rather than helping the students explore these issues further, the teacher appeared to be concerned with establishing that "no white man got any more out of it (the war) than any black man did". This would seem to be a difficult position to sustain in the face of even fairly basic knowledge of the history of racism in the United States and the unlikelihood of any area of life being unaffected by it, including the army. Dismissing a comment from Peter that "All the whites were all the captains and officers", he remained insistent that there was an essential equality in white and

black being cannon-fodder together on the battlefield. The single answer at which he appeared to be aiming to explain Uncle Hammer's alienation was that blacks having fought in the war for the country were afterwards "deprived of having any hand in that country".

In this lesson the teacher appeared so committed to achieving a particular reply that he dismissed a number of suggestions from students which were in fact more perceptive than his own conception of a bias-free war. Following this session I produced information on the overt segregation and discrimination in the American Army Draft of the time from the autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois (1968). Although the teacher read this to the students, he did not however acknowledge that he had previously misconstrued the relationship between white and black soldiers, nor that he had underestimated the extent of racism to which Uncle Hammer was responding. It would not be surprising if students ended up somewhat confused.

Another discussion revealed the teacher pushing the students to make judgements on Uncle Hammer at a point when they were possibly just beginning to understand some of the pressures which helped form his outlook. When Stacey allows himself to be cheated by T.J. out of the new coat given him by Uncle Hammer, Hammer's response is that he deserves to lose it if he is so foolish to listen to what someone like T.J. says about him. Clearly he wants to teach Stacey a lesson about survival. Without time first to respond to and explore the situation, the students were immediately asked whether Uncle Hammer was right and not perhaps "a little over harsh":

A.P.: Is he (Uncle Hammer) right in his more general view that the world is full of people who will try to do you in.. do you down.. who are just simply trying to get what you've got?... Isn't that a little over harsh?... John?

JOHN: No because considering when.. white people would.. you know kill them if they did something wrong in their work.

A.P.: Are you a Christian?... Does that really fit with your Christian teaching. This view that everyone is a rat just simply out to do someone else down?

Despite what developed into a sustained challenge to justify himself (in relation to the teacher's questions about 'Christian teaching'), John maintained that Uncle Hammer was right to be tough because of "the white people trying to put them down in all sorts of ways".¹ A number of boys agreed with John.

It could be argued that the teacher was not necessarily trying to promote a particular view of his own (i.e. that Uncle Hammer was over harsh) but he could have been playing devil's advocate in order to get students to defend their views. Nevertheless the framework within which students were asked to respond was essentially adversarial and judgemental. It was noticeable that a couple of girls only entered the discussion when specifically called upon by Alan to give their views about whether "it is generally true that you go through life constantly looking over your shoulder expecting somebody to cheat you". The teacher's phrasing at this point actually shifted the students' focus away from the text by asking them to articulate their own generalised precepts. The discussion ended with a couple of students affirming the importance of trusting people, and it would thereby seem implicitly criticising Uncle Hammer's perspective. Michael for instance stated: "I would give people the benefit of the doubt because I don't think everybody is bad". Given that the students precepts were formulated under very different conditions from those of the black experience within the text and that no mention was made of such striking contextual differences, I was conscious of the danger of the students being encouraged to stand in judgement of black characters on whom they imposed their own very limited frames of reference. Instead of the teacher approaching the text as a powerful means of imaginative entry into the experience of oppression, for the

¹ This provided an interesting contrast to John's previous comment on Papa being "a bit harsh" in advising Stacey against developing a friendship with Jeremy, where it would seem John viewed the decision from the rejected white boy's perspective.

students to explore as fully as possible in order to challenge and widen their own frames of reference, he appeared to be using the text for a kind of routine question and answer session which, far from challenging perceptions, may have ended up entrenching them. I was also reminded of Alan Parsons's own critique in his pre-project interview of literary criticism sessions in which the teacher's personal agenda ends up dominating discussion of the text.

As mentioned in Chapter Five, the teacher had other preoccupations absorbing his major energies by this stage and the kind of collaborative reflection for which I had hoped had not emerged. This was the first time he was teaching a work by a black author and he was neither very familiar with black writing nor issues of black experience. When introducing Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry to the students, he had told them how it was fast becoming one of the most popular "mainstream" books in school, perhaps even set to replace To Kill A Mockingbird because it was "shorter and more accessible". However, when it came to reading the book out in class, he seemed to have some difficulty initially, commenting to me after the first session that it had "a bad beginning". Although having previously said he would not attempt an American accent, he did in fact affect a marked Southern drawl for dialogue, bordering on high-pitched caricature for the teacher Miz Crocker. Perhaps this covered a basic unease, as did his later comments that the book was "wordy". Clearly some of his questions, particularly about Uncle Hammer and Papa's advice on Jeremy, indicated his problems with taking on board a black perspective.

I was taken by surprise however when he openly announced in class that he thought Mildred Taylor must have been copying Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird when writing her book. After reading Papa's reply to Mr Jamison that the boycott would continue - so the Logan children would at least know their parents had tried to resist the injustice - Alan

unexpectedly directed towards me the statement: "Do you know I think she must have had To Kill A Mockingbird open in front of her when she wrote this book." My immediate reply was that the experiences described were not unique, but repeated thousands of time over in the South. If there were similarities in the texts it was because the experiences were so universal. Alan, however, was insistent that he had already spotted three lines copied from Harper Lee's book. He seemed to be referring in particular to what Papa had said about carrying on for the sake of the children. I could only reiterate that "People probably said the same thing time and time and time again... because the experience was very much the same". It was not possible to know what the students made of this exchange or whether I had been at all effective in countering the teacher's remarks. Regardless of whether the students knew Harper Lee was white, the message communicated by their teacher was that the black author of their book had apparently been copying her text from someone else. Alan Parsons seemed oblivious of both the absurdity and the insult in his unsubstantiated comments - that a black writer should need to copy from a white writer to describe black experience. What was clear was that Alan was appearing increasingly irritated by the course. Although various factors were involved (including important personal factors unrelated to the course), it could not be ignored that his irritation appeared to be mounting as the focus within the texts moved to a more specifically black/white domain. It seems reasonable to hypothesize that the teacher himself found a black perspective uncomfortably challenging. Instead of being willing to acknowledge this and talk it through, his response was to retract interest and continue at a basically perfunctory level.

Acknowledgement and exploration of white identity

Being able to explore one's own feelings and perceptions without becoming defensive is a pre-condition for being able to open out this area with students. It can only be done

within a framework of trust. There were instances when, in the privacy of the reading journals and home tape recordings, some students not only indicated their consciousness of white identity but a sense of some disturbance. For example Neil - the boy who wrote in his journal that he was "very proud of Jeremy" - also wrote how he admired Jeremy's persistence in trying to befriend the Logans and he wished that they would give him some encouragement. In an earlier comment he indicated "I am also disappointed that the trouble starts at grass roots with the whites."

Neil was not alone in acknowledging his white identity and expressing unease. Julia wrote "I am very quickly beginning to hate whites and that includes me! The men are really cruel and it's a shame they have to have such an attitude as they have towards blacks." Alison expressed her conflicting emotions about the racist attack on the Berry family - ending in death and burning - with particular honesty:

"How can any man do such a thing to another man?... I feel so angry and frustrated, when you know this kind of thing went on and the people responsible are the same colour as you. I feel guilty and responsible for their actions. And how can they just laugh about it? I just don't understand some people."

Exploring this area would have required considerable sensitivity. The object of the students reading Mildred Taylor's novel was not for them to be left with a personal sense of white guilt or for them to "hate whites". What was important however was for them to develop some understanding of the destructive effects of racism - not just in the physical sense, but in terms of the quality of relationships possible in a society in which a powerful element denies equality to, and oppresses, another section. It was important for them to begin to understand the damage to Jeremy as well as to Stacey Logan. It was important for them to begin to ask questions for themselves about racism.

An instance of this kind of genuine questioning could be heard coming from Alison in the discussion she taped at home with

Erica. As with the tape they had made about Friedrich and the Holocaust, they moved beyond the initial set task. The students had been asked to respond to a number of reviewers' comments on Roll Of Thunder, Hear My Cry which appeared in the English Centre's background book. Having done this collaboratively at some length, Alison and Erica became involved in a more general discussion revolving around both the novel and the accompanying booklet. Alison seemed to have read more of the latter than had been specified by the teacher:

ERICA: And that's the kind of attitude they had wasn't it?

ALISON: Yeah where was it at? (looking through background book) There was something like "Lynch her!".. you know the way they hang them and that. They were willing to do that. I think that it is quite disgusting really.

ERICA: But it is stupid really the way they thought about them though wasn't it?

ALISON: Yeah I know.. but what I don't understand is why we felt this way towards them.

ERICA: They are no different are they?

ALISON: No! That's what I can't understand. (Suppressed giggle from Erica - embarrassment?)

The critical feature in this interchange is Alison's switch from "they" to "we" in her statement about not understanding "why we felt this way towards them". While acknowledging both a common white identity - that what happened was connected in some way to her as a white person - and a sense of disgust, she expressed her incomprehension at the racist behaviour. Possibly it was the earnestness in Alison's tone that provoked Erica's giggle. Although close friends, Erica's comments in discussion and in writing never reflected the same kind of involvement as those of Alison. Alison's concern with understanding could be seen yet again in a final comment in her journal: "Each child in the book is told at least once you are too young to understand. So how old do you have to be to understand?"

While Alison felt able to express her personal responses to Erica, as mentioned previously she only spoke in class if directly called upon to do so. The fact that the classroom

context was not sufficiently supportive to someone like Alison - so that she could feel confident to put forward her perceptions and concerns in a wider forum - was clearly a significant loss to the project.

Millie Murray and the challenge of a black perspective

As in her visit connected with Buddy, Millie Murray's focus in her double session with the students was to challenge preconceptions and to help put across the Logans' perspective particularly regarding the issues of racism. This workshop in which Millie was hotseated by the students as Cassie, Mama and Big Ma is described more fully in Chapter Eleven. The hotseating was followed by a short but significant role play between Cassie (Millie) and Jeremy (Peter) and a brief writing session. The intention of the role play was to highlight the conflict between Jeremy as a friendly individual and Jeremy as an unwilling, but inescapable, member of an oppressive social network. As described later (Chapter 11: 278-9), the experience of playing Jeremy and being confronted by Cassie appeared to be a potent one at a personal level for Peter who played Jeremy. What was missing however was the opportunity afterwards for detailed reflection. For instance it would have been valuable for the students to have discussed the issues of Jeremy and the Logans again in the light of the role play. It would also have been valuable for the students to have contrasted the simplistic notion of the Logans 'hating whites' with Millie's answer in role as Cassie to the question "Do you really hate Mr Simms?" Millie had replied:

"Well.. I guess I do.. I mean I don't just hate him cause he's a white man and he's Lillian Jean's papa.. I hate him because he's not a nice man... well he probably just hate me cause I'm black".

They could have usefully considered how Papa or Mama might have answered that same question, as well as compared it with Millie's replies about Jeremy, for example: "I mean Jeremy does try but well it's kinda like a difficult situation cause unless you live in that kind of oppression.. you may not understand...". Reflection on such issues may have helped lead

towards conceptions of racism which extended beyond the domain of simply personal attitude. However while time was constantly a limiting factor, this kind of class discussion clearly would also have required considerable awareness and sensitivity on the part of the teacher.

Final reflections and students' perceptions of their own learning

In spite of the various limitations discussed above, final comments from the students suggested that quite a number perceived the novel as having had some effect on them. This was also despite initial difficulties with the dialogue. These comments were made both in writing in their journals and orally, on the tapes made at home responding to extracts from other reviews. The majority of students, male and female, acknowledged that they had learnt things they had not known before about the extent of racism in the American South in the 1930s. Reviews by the girls, however, tended on the whole to be fuller and, in addition, to reveal more about an affective level of response.

In her half-term review Gaby had written about the book being interesting because it covered "lots of different aspects and issues of family life, social life and issues which have a political field." In her final review she expanded:

"I learned of family life in another country and the loving, caring thoughts they all have for each other. Also the other side where there is violence, bad feeling and alot of unjust racism... I thought the book was very realistic and there was never a false word in it. I also learned of how children of my age or maybe a bit younger had to cope with lots of different problems. They seemed to understand more about many matters and also had a sense of humour and also a sense of fear and dignity and would always stand up for themselves no matter what the consequences may turn out to be. I think that I will never have the same problems as they did and if I did I am not really sure how I would react but I don't think I would be as strong or stand up for myself as much as they did."

The honesty and sensitivity of this response reveal the learning derived from Gaby's involvement in the text. Her

admiration for the Logans was evident and she was aware of how the conditions under which they lived actually helped to create a resilience and maturity in the children which were not required for survival in her own environment. With this conceptual framework - and an ability to link emotional and intellectual responses - Gaby showed the potential to explore issues of racism at a social and structural level, had this been encouraged.²

As a person Gaby appeared quiet and restrained and her conversation with her friend Jacky provided a fascinating example of each girl not wanting to be confrontational and seeming to ratify the other's position, while then going on to express a different view. Having written in her journal that "the book was very realistic and there was never a false word in it", Gaby nevertheless did not challenge Jacky when early on she questioned the novel's veracity:

JACKY: I thought that the unity they (the Logans) had with each was a bit false.

GABY: Yeah.

Shortly afterwards however when Gaby quietly made the assertion about the novel that "it used to happen", Jacky sounded genuinely surprised, asking "Did it?" But it was not long before Jacky's defensiveness began to surface a little more openly:

JACKY: I think you know it was a bit unfair the way they said the whites had an easy life.. did you notice that? (Gaby: Yeah) You know they were going they were really hard up and they had a really bad life and everything and the whites had an easy laid-back life... like they'd got money you know all the time.. but they had to work for that didn't they?

GABY: Yeah.

JACKY: I suppose they had it easier.. but if they had to work for it.. (pause) What's your opinion on that one?

GABY: Well as I've already said, I think that the message although it is harsh, it's true.. (Jacky: Yeah) and you

² It was interesting that Gaby's use of language was sometimes quite convoluted. Regarded by the teacher as indicating some fundamental difficulty with language structure, it seems possible that it might have been indicative of her struggling to express new thoughts.

can't take it away really can you? You can't really say it wasn't true.

JACKY: What do you think the message was then?

GABY: (long pause) About survival and um.. how they coped, wasn't it?.. or maybe.. survival and how they coped with other people.. how they coped with the whites.

JACKY: Yeah.. I suppose so. I think the message was more saying that.. you know whites.. all whites have been really horrible to the blacks.. but they aren't nowadays, are they? I suppose they were. You know it was um like you've got to stick up for yourself and it's up to yourself to look after yourself.

GABY: Yeah mm.

JACKY: Yeah.

The use of 'yeah' by each girl should perhaps not be taken so much as a ratification of what the other has said, as much as simply an acknowledgement of the other person and her view. There seems to be the desire not to confront or argue. Gaby appeared still to hold on to the tenor of the responses expressed in her journal, although much more tentatively, hoping to gain the consensus of her friend. While Jacky did not directly deny Gaby's points she turned the focus to the white people whom she claimed were all portrayed as "horrible" and "laid-back". One might have expected Gaby, on the basis of what she had written in her journal, to question Jacky's interpretation. It is difficult to assess the extent to which she was aware of the apparent difference in their stated perspectives but not prepared to make an issue of it, for the sake of maintaining harmony. It is interesting to note in this respect her journal comment about not being able to be "as strong or stand up for myself" as the Logan children.

As with Gaby, Caroline's journal comments also revealed some self-reflection. Her sense of identification with the characters lead to her questioning her own ability to be as resistant and assertive as Cassie:

"I think I can identify with the characters more than any of the other books we have read in class. I can see myself in those positions and what I would have done would be alot like Cassie... because the book was written so well I could picture myself in the positions of the characters at different times but if I was really black and I lived at that particular time I don't know what I would have done even though I agree with most things

Cassie did I probably wouldn't have had the courage to do them. Before I read roll of thunder I didn't really know anything about slavery, now I know how everybody felt about it and what it really is."

Here Caroline has made the distinction between imaginative identification within the realm of fiction and the reality of "if I was really black". The latter would in fact be difficult to imagine, given that her frames of reference had been constructed from experiences as a white child. However, as mentioned in relation to Gaby, Caroline's responses suggested the potential to begin exploring issues of social and structural racism and their effect on personal identity.

Caroline's comments indicated a qualitatively different response to the novel and its characters from that of Michelle, the girl with the highest female score on both Racist Perceptions Surveys. Michelle's response to the video had been that it was "sad really. This is because no-one liked the coloured children. They can't help it, they didn't choose to be coloured just like we didn't choose to be white". Her response here was one of white sympathy and patronage. Her final review indicated her remaining firmly rooted in a white perspective, feeling however that she now knew more "*about blacks*" (my italics):

"From this book, I know much more about blacks. I hardly knew anything about them before, I never knew that the whites treated the blacks like that. From all the books we've read, I've learnt knew things which I didn't even know about... I think this book was really good, I liked it better than the others. It has taught me a lot about blacks."

Michelle's acknowledgement of having enjoyed the novel and her sense of new learning seemed quite genuine. Nevertheless she clearly perceived this as learning about 'other' people. Her frames of reference appeared to remain fixed by a white vantage point. In the taped conversation between Michelle and her friend Hannah, much of the discussion reflected their concerns as young white people. For example:

MICHELLE: I hardly knew anything about them really except that they were a different colour and that's all and now I know you know how the whites treated them and

everything. But if I was a white in those times I don't know what I would have done.. if it was now you know..

HANNAH: What if it was happening right now you would sort of probably identify with Jeremy? 'Cause of what he did?

MICHELLE: Well I don't know whether I would identify with them you know.. go and hang around with them and everything but I wouldn't really treat them.. you know really bad.

HANNAH: What even if everybody else did?

MICHELLE: Well.. I don't know.

HANNAH: I don't know what I'd do actually... because most people they sort of all follow the crowd in a way don't they?

MICHELLE: Yeah.. um..

HANNAH: I mean unless you are sort of a born leader then you can sort of do what you want..

Neither girl raised the question of racism from the perspective of the Logans. Instead they focused on how they might respond as white people, with Hannah appearing ready to exonerate complicity in racism with the notion of most people being powerless to make their own decisions with the exception of the "born leader".

Amongst the boys, two very clear examples of students suggesting they had gained new 'knowledge' while continuing to display fixed racist perceptions were provided by John and Ian, the highest scorers on the first Racist Perceptions Scale. John first focused on the book's 'moral' for racists, before revealing in his next sentence his own deeply racist perceptions and fears about black people:

"I think that Roll of Thunder was quite a strong book and it would teach racist people quiet alot in that black etc. are exactly the same as themselves. It makes me think that if it could happen in the 1930s it could happen now, which is frightening really as it could be that blacks try to do it."

John - who on a number of occasions qualified what he said with statements like "I'm not being racist but.." - often seemed concerned to say the 'right' thing. It is difficult to know how conscious were his attempts to cover up racist feelings. It was my personal feeling that Ian was frequently more consciously manipulative in what he said and wrote than John. With the increasing focus on black-white relations in

the course, there appeared to be a growing undertone of resentment in Ian's journal comments. At times there seemed also to be a hint of callousness, possibly calculated to provoke. His bored prediction at the beginning that Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry "is just like discrimination between whites and blacks" was followed by contradictory messages in response to the white bus driver's attack on the Logan children. While apparently condemning it on the one hand, he casually stated that some discrimination against black people was inevitable. The suggestion was that the bus driver was perhaps just going a bit over the top:

"I think it's wrong just because of the colour. The worst thing is when the bus came by and everybody signalled horrible things and especially an adult encouraging them... I think that blacks are blacks and they are bound to get some stick but this is very much cruel and I wouldn't want to be on the white bus if that happend."

Ian's implicit attitude appeared to be that black people should simply accept their station in life. After reading about the treatment of the children by the white shopkeeper during Mama's trip to sell her produce in Strawberry he wrote:

"if people are going to hate them all there live I can't seen them bothering to try and sell there dairy produce... I think the part where the shop keeper is serving other [white] people whilst serving T.J. is just stressing a point which we already no. Whites don't like blacks."

Ian's tone implied 'So what?'. His written comments seemed to match his body language and deliberately casual manner of speaking at times - a tactic which appeared to be aimed at subverting serious attention away from the topic under discussion. Writing about the tragedy of T.J., he not only contradicted himself but appeared to be wanting to shock:

"I think they should let him get what is coming to him and death I don't think will teach him anything. They should set an example to everybody else and give him a slow death I think that way will make him think He will then know that his life has been squandered. So far the book has been nothing special.."

In his final review written shortly after the above, Ian once again - while saying on the one hand that the work had been

"very good fun" - conveyed more fundamentally a sense of bored superiority:

"I think the work we have done connected with roll of thunder has been very good fun and I have learnt that the blacks were treated very harshly. I didn't think that they were treated quite as badly as the book made out. I knew that the blacks and whites didn't like each other but I didn't know they went to extremes to hurt each other... I knew most of what they were telling me. The blacks are a subject which we regularly hear about and are common knowledge so I didn't find it as knowledgable as Friedrich was. I would give the book 8/10."

The disparagement is clear. The question has to be asked whether for a student like Ian - whose racist frames of reference were deeply entrenched - the net result of studying Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry was not simply to produce a better-informed racist?

The same question might need to be asked in relation to Carl whose Racist Perceptions score showed a dramatic increase of ten points over the year from a pre-project low score of 3. His initial prediction of boredom on first viewing the book (as in the case of Friedrich), was transformed into the claim that it had been "the best reader" of the year and to have "opened my eyes to the harshness of the 1930s in Southern America". It is indeed difficult to know what kind of effect his reading might have had, if any, in shaping his responses to the second Racist Perceptions Scale.

In the light of such questions, Neil's view about the potential of the novel to change perceptions seems idealistic but is nevertheless instructive about his own thinking. In a tape made alone at home he stated:

"The book gives us a bigger view... and helps us develop new ways of thinking. If someone was quite racist then it would, I think, help them to think in different ways.. how the trouble started, how it developed and why blacks were campaigning so much for equal rights because a racist person might think they were just doing it for the sake of it.. nothing better to do than go and bother the government. This book helps to break down that way of thinking. I would recommend it to be read in schools."

Neil's focus was on rationality and the power of rational argument "to break down" a racist "way of thinking". Yet while acknowledging that the book "has opened up a whole new channel of knowledge about the slavery in the South of America", Neil nevertheless could not understand why Cassie so resented having to apologise to Jeremy's malicious sister Lillian Jean for not getting off the pavement to make way for her.

Like Neil, Michael similarly believed that the book should be widely read:

"This book should be read in all schools because it teaches people about how the blacks were persecuted and a lot of people are in the dark and it's important they should know what the blacks went through at this time."

In his own responses to the novel Michael did not hold back in referring to his own emotions. For instance in his final review he wrote how "The last few lines touched me where Cassie told us that she never liked T.J. but what had happened swayed her thoughts... It was very enjoyable". The last sentence suggested however that his emotions remained fairly comfortable, rather than disturbed. In contrast to Neil's focus on reason, Michael felt the novel would change the feelings of readers, although he did not indicate how:

"...because those people who like blacks already, this will make them like blacks more and perhaps the people that don't like blacks very much, having read some of the situations that have happened in this book will make them like them after all because many people that don't like blacks don't even know why. I've heard people that don't like blacks say 'I don't like the black people and I've asked them why and they haven't a clue'."

Whereas Neil thought analytically in terms of developing understanding of the process and effects of discrimination, Michael conceptualised the problem of attitude in sweepingly simple terms of either liking or not liking black people. His tone of voice on the tape was sincere and it was as if he was genuinely thinking out his responses on the spot. However it is worth recalling that while Neil's Racist Perceptions score decreased over the year (from medium low to low), Michael

scored in the medium-high range on the first survey and his score remained constant on the second. On both occasions he registered himself as uncertain about having more black students in school, having a family of another colour move next door and unsure about black-white marriages. In other words, a sympathetic response to Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry appeared not to shift these fundamentally racist perceptions or, in his own simplistic terms, make him "like blacks more".

Probably the most emotive final response amongst the boys came from Paul, who not only acknowledged strong emotions but wrote of "a new perspective" having developed within himself:

"This story was powerful and sad. quite clearly one of the most brilliant books I've ever read... This book has given me a new perspective of how blacks were treated. I think the books we've read have given everybody a new perspective of races being treated poorly."

Here again a student had generalised the effects of the novel. From his own sense of personal change, Paul assumed that others too would have gained "a new perspective". The reality appeared to be rather that those students who were already tending to openness were the ones most open to Mildred Taylor's messages. For instance Angela, who described the book as "brilliant!!!!!! the best book I have read at St Benedicts", appeared particularly sensitive to the author's intention to create "the heroes missing from the schoolbooks of my childhood" (English Centre, 1984). In discussion with her friend Tanya, Angela recorded her own process of discovery as a reader responsive to where she was being placed by the writer:

ANGELA: Cassie learns about her generation and the generation before her and all her ancestors being slaves.. and when they take you back on their journey it's like us learning as well as if you're in Cassie's place.

Angela's responsiveness as a reader to the writer's intentions and her willingness to be "in Cassie's place" makes an interesting contrast with how Michelle appeared to be constrained by viewing the Logans from a white vantage point.

As mentioned previously (Chapter 6: 146), I had initially considered limiting my focus to the responses of selected individuals with differing scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale, but had chosen to retain a wider focus on the perceptual filters that appeared to be operating amongst the students more generally. However a longitudinal detailed case study of the construction of reading responses of two students such as Angela and Michelle to a novel such as Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry could prove illuminating.

CHAPTER NINE: RESPONSES TO WORK ON 'RACE' CLASSIFICATION

Rationale for a science session on 'race' classification

With the students due to study a South African novel following Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, it was important to encourage them to begin to question the basic notion of 'race'. This was not only because it is such a key concept in South Africa, where the pseudo-science of 'race' classification has been enshrined in law, but because acceptance of the existence of 'different races' appears still to be common in this country. In the last century the work of Victorian anthropologists added the aura of scientific study to the much older notion that the world consisted of biologically different 'kinds' of people (Chapter 1: 2-3). The whole enterprise of slavery and colonialism could not have been undertaken without an ideology which constructed the dominated as a sub-species. Yet the crucial work of scientists who have developed a critique of the concept of 'racial difference' (e.g. Hiernaux et al, 1965) has not been popularised. The limited study of genetics undertaken by students at St Benedict's, for instance, did not include this area. The basis of the term 'race' also needed to be questioned within a scientific framework, given the credibility associated with scientific study. Furthermore, I felt that linking English with Science might encourage students to make connections between the fiction they were studying and the real world.

The session was devised and run by two science teachers, one white, one black - John Siraj-Blatchford and Mike Vance. Having worked on this topic with students in London, where classes could attempt to classify systematically the considerable variety amongst themselves and discover just how arbitrary such a process was, they were keen to try out a workshop with a class of all white students. As a rationale for their work they quoted population geneticist Richard Lewontin from Harvard University (1987):

"The result of the study of genetic variation is in sharp contrast with the everyday impression that major 'races'

are well differentiated. Clearly, those superficial differences in hair form, skin colour, and facial features that are used to distinguish 'races' from each other are not typical of human genes in general. Human 'racial' differentiation is, indeed, only skin deep. Any use of racial categories must take its justification from some source other than biology."

Specific objectives of the session

The specific objectives of the science session as defined by the two teachers were:

- to enable the students to see classification as a tool relating to the purpose of the classifier
- to recognise the frequent arbitrariness of classification
- to encourage questions about the basis on which people have been assigned to 'racial groups'
- to recognise that these are not groups which are intrinsically different biologically but social constructs created by people
- to recognise that classifying people into 'races' is a form of control.

Outline of activities

The 80-minute session consisted of the students, working in groups, being asked to classify a range of different items in turn, in whatever ways they felt most appropriate. They were first given a variety of conductors and insulators, then assorted electrical components, pieces of coloured paper and finally pictures of children engaging in a range of different activities. The students' classifications were different both within groups and between groups. The intention of the exercise was that they should recognise the degree of arbitrariness in classification and the relationship between classification and purpose. A group of girls sorted the electrical objects according to whether they could be made into necklaces. When it was revealed afterwards that all the electrical components were in fact redundant or obsolete, the

point was made that these girls' classification system was probably the most useful!

The students were then shown slides showing how Victorian anthropologists classified people. Asked by the science teachers whether they could place people accurately into the anthropologists' categories, many of the students suggested it would be easy. However, as John Siraj-Blatchford reported afterwards "when challenged directly with the coloured photographs of people they found this very difficult and could come to no general agreement". Interestingly, when the students had earlier been given the photographs of children to classify in any way they found appropriate, no group had used colour or 'race', but rather used classification according to criteria such as expression or actions. It may well be that there was avoidance, conscious or unconscious, of 'race' related classification, possibly related to the presence of a black teacher and notions of 'appropriate' response. This absence of 'race' or colour related classification contrasts strongly with Davey's findings concerning classification by primary age children (Davey, 1983; 1986).

After finding difficulty in using the anthropologists' categories with any accuracy, the students were then asked to consider what might have been the purpose of such classification. For homework they were asked to comment on the session. A few days later, after viewing the first part of a documentary on apartheid (BBC Scene, 1988), they were asked to respond to the sheet "What is 'race'?" (Appendix 8.1), which featured population classification in South Africa. In addition they were given a sheet to fill in entitled 'Classification' (Appendix 8.2). This enquired about their understanding of the relationship between classification and purpose as well as their responses to South Africa's 'race' classification system and to the classification of people in general.

The students' responses

A few students expressed being puzzled, even after the session, at what a science lesson had to do with English. Making this kind of connection across subject boundaries was certainly not customary at St Benedict's. In particular they were being asked to link areas of 'knowledge' traditionally separated into largely 'cognitive' and 'affective' zones. While their initial writing on the session was mainly concerned with straight-forward reporting in an appropriately restrained tone, the sheet on 'Classification' elicited emotional responses as well as analysis from two-thirds of the students (all the girls with one exception and half the boys). Everyone expressed disapproval of South Africa's 'race' classification.

But while a number of students rejected any idea of classifying people on the grounds of everyone being an individual, others expressed acceptance of certain forms of classification, for example, being put in classes according to age and ability in school. Almost half the students appeared to recognise that power was an important element in classifying people. Caroline's response was particularly strong:

"I think that people always want to be more powerful than other people and one way this is happening is classification of skin colour and features. I think that it is really sick that some people have to lower themselves and say they are better than someone else because they are white..."

While Ian, too, clearly recognised the social purpose of classification, his perspective appeared to be very different:

"We classify people so that we can compare them to what we are like. We classify people to certain groups. There are many which society accept and many which we don't. Vandals, gays, drug pushers etc. There are many which society except, middle class, hard workers..."

By using the pronoun "we", Ian firmly placed himself with those who have power to classify and declare others to be

outcasts. His response to the question "What do you think about classification of people?" was equally interesting:

"I think classification under circumstances is acceptable as far as you choose your friends. But like in S. Africa it is stupid. I wouldn't like my life being ruled by my race or colour."

Ian revealed a certain moral ambivalence here. Classifying people for his own friendship purposes was acceptable and, given his responses on the Racist Perceptions Scale, it seemed probable that colour and 'race' would have been factors for him in relating to people. However he did not want his life "ruled by my race or colour". What seemed consistent, therefore, in his attitudes was an egocentric perspective.

Ian's ambivalence and uncertainty was also revealed in group discussion in response to the sheet entitled "What is 'race'?" This consisted of a newspaper article about an abandoned month-old South African baby which had been withheld for adoption as doctors could not determine to which 'race' she belonged. The article was accompanied by definitions under the 1950 South African Population Registration Act of four different 'racial groups'. The students were asked to discuss whether the definitions seemed "biologically sound and scientific" and to consider the purpose of this sort of classification.

Ian was in a self-selected group consisting of himself, Peter, Paul, Neil and Dan. Out of this group only Neil had shown in his written responses to the science session both a realisation that classification by 'race' was unscientific, as well as connected with exercising power. While Dan and Ian clearly acknowledged the power of the classifier, they did not essentially question the scientific basis of classification itself. Nor did Paul and Peter, who nevertheless expressed strong feelings against classification on a moral basis. In their discussion while there was general agreement that trying to classify the baby - as well as 'race' classification in general - was "stupid", the five students were nevertheless

drawn into a convoluted attempt to make sense of the Registration Act definitions. The complexity of a construct such as 'race' is revealed in the following extract:

NEIL (reading from sheet): "...Do these definitions seem biologically sound and scientific to you?"

IAN: Not really.

PETER: No.

NEIL: No.

IAN: They might in South Africa but I wouldn't like to be judged like that.

PETER: No because I mean.. they don't actually know do they?...

.....

PETER: But if they.. they just let the um.. baby develop more then they could tell by the um.. by his face and stuff.

NEIL: Because all they've done it on is looks, haven't they? They haven't gone into the scientific have they?

PETER: They can't actually classify a baby, can they?.. because it's too young.. it's too young to the features to have developed...

NEIL: Because my brother used to have blond hair and then it went dark... features can change.

PAUL: Well maybe they should sort of just wait until it has grown up and able to talk and then you could also judge it by the sound of its voice.

.....

PETER: If they just waited for the baby to grow up a bit.. you know.. just a few months more.. then just let the features evolve and then they could take it from there. That'd be the wisest thing to do.

IAN: I think that they should sort of scrap the whole idea of white, coloured and all that and they should sort of make a new.. um Act-

NEIL: Well I don't think that they should have classification at all.

PAUL: Because I mean everybody's-

DAN: Everybody's the same, I mean there's no difference.

IAN: No I think they should.. as they've got a problem there, they should sort of change it.. and sort of let you have a sort a bit of.. a part in the say in it..

NEIL/PETER: Yeah.

IAN: Then that might sort of stop the sort of violence and all that.

PETER: What you mean like let.. let black..black people be a member of Parliament over there and stuff like that.

IAN: No not necessarily that.. but sort of.. ease off.. sort of give them.. sort of chance to.. sort of.. do something wrong and then shoot them or something.

NEIL: I think that they should sort of.. let them live where they want to live.. and not.. not herd them into these black homeships.. or whatever.

The discussion was notable for the apparent contradictions in perspectives. For instance Peter who began by saying the definitions were not biologically sound ended by suggesting that the baby could be classified once it was older and its features more developed. In subsequently responding to the sheet on classification he wrote "I hate the idea of South African's system of race", but still did not seem able to recognise that 'race' classification was intrinsically an instrument of power as well as scientifically invalid:

"I don't like the idea of people in South Africa being classified for their colour. But if it's done just to keep a file of all the different groups of people that have lived on the earth it is a good idea."

Ian, surprisingly, was the first to suggest that "they should scrap the whole idea of white, coloured and all that". However his subsequent comments raised questions about his motivation and meaning. He seemed concerned with violence as a problem yet disagreed that black people should be able to vote. It is difficult to know what to make of his remark about the need to "ease off.. sort of give them.. sort of chance to.. sort of.. do something wrong and then shoot them or something." One possibility is that having had his comment on scrapping 'race' classification taken seriously, he found his remarks were being interpreted as supporting equality - and therefore wished to manoeuvre out of that position by becoming flippant and saying something outrageous. It is interesting that in this self-selected group, Ian did not find himself continually confronted as in discussions with Angela. He was therefore not having to be continually on the defensive but was in a situation where the others were prepared to credit what he said. Given the topic, he might have found this fairly threatening, hence his resorting to throwing in something casually provocative but not absolutely clear. This was a strategy I had seen him use on other occasions. But whereas Angela would have responded vehemently to an apparent suggestion to shoot black people - thereby rising to Ian's bait by diverting from the topic under discussion - the students in this group simply continued commenting on

injustices in South Africa and what changes they would like made. Ian however soon reintegrated himself with a statement that perhaps indicated something of his own ambiguous feelings:

IAN: I think all it is.. the white government is sort of trying to.. sort of give the whites the most amount of power they can possibly get.. (pause) I think it would be really horrible to be black living over there.. (pause) I think some of the.. young white people.. sort of round about our age would sort of be.. confused about what the sort of um.. well maybe younger than us.. confused about what the hell is going on.

PETER: I mean it's all confusing.

IAN: I get scared.. about will that happen to me sort of one day.

Given Ian's initially high score on the Racist Perceptions Scale and his sharp increase on the second, it was often difficult to know when he was consciously covering up racist perceptions and feelings by playing a part or when he was being genuine. For instance, what effect did tape recording have on what he said? This was a question which of course applied not only to Ian, although for many of the students once they had got accustomed to the tape recorders I felt it unlikely that recording had a significant effect on their discussions in the sense of tailoring what they said.

Another student, however, whom I sometimes felt was being consciously careful to give 'appropriate' responses was Andrew who had lived in South Africa for seven years. On the first and second Racist Perceptions surveys he scored towards the non-racist end of the scale (7 and 6 respectively). But in the discussion about 'race' classification for the first time he seemed to let go, quite openly putting forward a case for apartheid. The group was self-selected, comprising Andrew, Carl, Graham and Terry. An interesting tension developed between Andrew supported by Carl on the one side and Graham supported by Terry on the other. It seemed likely that the dynamics of the discussion were affected by tensions arising from their relationships at that time outside the classroom.

Andrew took the immediate lead in the group, declaring "it's very good" in response to the question about what was the purpose of 'race' classification. (Yet on his homework sheet that night he wrote that it was "not very good" and that "The classification of people is stupid but it has its purposes".) Although Andrew appeared to have the confidence of 'special knowledge' since the items related to South Africa, Graham straight away countered Andrew's assertion that classification was good:

GRAHAM: No it's not very good at all.

ANDREW (giggling): Yes it is.. the place would be running over with kaffirs.

GRAHAM: It's really bad.. it's really bad! By now they should just give up the country-

ANDREW (glibly): Yes, yes, yes.

GRAHAM: They should give the country over to the blacks.

ANDREW (simultaneously): The place is running with kaffirs I tell you! We used to have a maid!

While Graham's tone was serious throughout, Andrew's initial flippancy soon led to mockery of Graham's alleged naivete. Carl was particularly dismissive, referring to "little vain Graham". Graham however remained firm in raising the issue of equal rights. It is interesting to note that over the project year Graham's score on the Racist Perceptions Scale decreased slightly (from 9 to 6), while Carl's increased significantly (from 3 to 13). I was surprised to find Graham supported by Terry, even when derided by Carl for "copying Graham". Usually Terry appeared to have a laissez-faire attitude to racism and indeed his score on the Racist Perceptions Scale increased from 10 to 18 over the year. As mentioned earlier, there may have been tensions within the group that were extraneous to the subject under discussion.

In the course of the heated discussion Andrew put forward a series of racist propositions, each of which Graham challenged, for example:

"if there wasn't apartheid there'd be lots of trouble out there."

"we used to pay them nice.. he was very happy working for us." (re. the family's servants including the gardener)

"the whites had all the technology and that.. they built up the country... if the whites didn't go and build up the country there wouldn't be.. it would still be Zulus."

"if the Americans didn't take out the Indians there wouldn't be a big nice place now would there?"

Graham was particularly tenacious in questioning Andrew on how he could say that the gardener, living in a hut at the bottom of his garden, was actually happy. Andrew however insisted that he had personal experience and he 'knew'.

It is important to note that while Andrew acknowledged that the definitions of 'race' did not seem biologically sound, this did not appear in any way to affect the racist feelings shaping his concepts. In a similar fashion, Ian's recognition of the element of power in the classification of people, did not mean he identified with the victims of that power. In other words, it could not be assumed that even if all the intentions for learning were achieved in the science session, that racist feelings and values would necessarily be affected. Nevertheless, the science teachers hoped that the session would enable students to argue more effectively a case against the belief that 'races' are inherently different.

Gender differences in responses

It was interesting that a considerably greater proportion of girls than boys included their personal responses to classification in reporting on the session. Significantly too perhaps, it was the discussion in the group with only girls that remained rooted in the human consequences of classification, with a variety of issues concerning equality and justice being raised. This discussion amongst Angela, Alison, Michelle, Julia and Hannah formed a stark contrast to those of the boys-only groups. Homing immediately into the human angle of the newspaper story they began by considering why the baby might have been abandoned. While strongly sympathetic to the baby, they also showed considerable sensitivity in exploring the mother's possible circumstances and motives.

While many students described classification as "stupid" and replied to the question on the biological soundness of South African 'race' definitions by saying "no", this group went further to ask the question why they were unsound. Discussion first of what was meant by "biological" led to the acknowledgement that nobody's features were exactly the same, Hannah stating that "Not all blacks have big noses and whites got small noses". Apart from accepting the need to classify people according to blood groups (for medical purposes), there was not only strong rejection of any attempt to classify people, but a recognition of the way stereotypes are formed and used - for instance how stereotypes could be used against people with freckles, glasses, or braces. The group also seemed to recognise how the case of the baby encapsulated the absurdity of a system of 'race' classification:

ANGELA: They are building up this thing about apartheid and everything and then one little baby knocks it all down.

ALISON: Yeah! One little baby!

ANGELA: They are always saying it really works.. so I can put you there and you there and you there and then when it comes to the crunch it doesn't work.. How can you categorise someone like that?

?: Yeah.

?: It's so cute. (followed by cooing, baby noises)

What seemed to anchor the group was their concern for the baby and throughout the discussion there was a sense of sharing views and developing consensus. Discussion of the purpose of 'race' classification focused on power:

MICHELLE: They should change it round... let the blacks have power over the whites.

ALISON: I think we should be equal.

?: Yeah.

JULIA: We are equal in this country.

ALISON: No.. we're not fully equal.

ANGELA: Theoretically we are equal.. the government thinks that we are equal. You go down to Birmingham.. people burn Asians' houses.. kill them.. (?:Yeah) You go into any of the big cities..."

The discussion that followed about injustice included personal experience, as well as examples drawn from the film they had seen on South Africa (BBC Scene, 1988) and reference to Roll

of Thunder, Hear My Cry. In other words there seemed to be a sense of these students drawing together, or pooling, their thoughts and feelings. It is interesting to consider this mode of discussion, which seemed to operate in terms of accommodation and non-confrontation, in relation to the findings on the Racist Perceptions Scale. On the second survey the girls in the project class not only achieved the lowest score across the year group (i.e. at the non-racist end of the scale) but also the lowest standard deviation (i.e. they shared the greatest consensus). In contrast both the male discussions referred to above involved either open confrontation or aggression (as in the attack on Graham) or an element of individuals tending to pull in different directions, possibly even intending to destabilise the discussion (as in a couple of Ian's remarks). This again points to the inter-relationship of content and context and the inseparability of 'knowledge' from 'ways of knowing'. Deconstructing biological notions of 'race' was not likely to occur simply through the provision of new content. For instance there was a significant difference in Ian's recognition of the power of the classifier - and his empathy with the classifier - and that of Angela who wrote:

"I immediately felt insulted when I was put into my appropriate group.

A. Because I looked nothing like the picture.

B. Because I was hurt that I was grouped in a lump with millions of other people because we were white."

Angela evidently empathised with the victims of classification. Both Ian and Angela's construct of 'classification' might be said to have included the element of power and to have fulfilled one of the objectives of the science session i.e. to recognise that classifying people into 'races' is a form of control. But their 'knowledge' of that power appeared qualitatively different.

The science teachers felt on the basis of the written responses that the session had been successful for many students in terms of the original objectives and the connections they appeared to have made. However, given the

variations in perspectives and 'ways of knowing', it would be naive to over-estimate the effect of a one-off session. Unfortunately Alan Parsons did not attend and so was not in a position to build on the ideas explored through science when they arose in the context of the South African novel, thus helping students link cognitive and affective responses. Such cross-curricular, collaborative study focusing on racism and concepts of 'race' is obviously an area worth further investigation.

CHAPTER TEN: RESPONSES TO WAITING FOR THE RAIN - SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES ACROSS THE 'RACE' DIVIDE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Outline of 'Waiting for the Rain'

Sheila Gordon's first novel for young people focuses on the relationship of two boys - one white, one black - growing up in South Africa around the 1980s. Frikkie, a town child who lives for his holidays in the country, sees himself destined to inherit his uncle's farm with all its privileges. He assumes that Tengo - his childhood playmate on the farm, son of the foreman and the housemaid - will simply follow in his father's footsteps to become Frikkie's own "boss-boy" when they are grown up. While Frikkie is content to spend long leisure hours pouring over comics and pictures of farm machinery, Tengo is consumed with questions about the wider world. While Frikkie chafes at the constraints of school, for Tengo the reality of being black in South Africa makes school a persistent pipe-dream. To Frikkie's uncle, Oom Koos, education for his workers' children would just cause trouble - and give them ideas above their station.

It is through his cousin Joseph from Soweto that Tengo first begins to reflect on the condition of his life. Joseph's mother works for a family of white liberals, the Millers. Although Tengo is delighted to have a box of old children's books sent by the Millers, Joseph becomes increasingly cynical about the nature of the Millers' generosity. When Tengo eventually manages to leave the farm to attend school in Soweto, Dr. Miller offers to pay for his school books, Joseph however pointing out to Tengo that the cost is probably less than that of the annual fees for the golf club. Although Claire, the Millers' art student daughter, impresses Tengo with her ideas for an ideally planned township, Joseph is dismissive. It is too late for benevolent goodwill by whites who still envisage black people living in townships while they continue living in their own mansions without any

disruption to their own lives. What is required is a transfer of power if there is to be "fair shares":

"...it's too late now. Man, can't you see? There's been too much suffering among our people. Too much pain. Too much bitterness. And now it's all built up into terrible anger, Tengo. *More terrible than they can imagine.* And out of this anger the change is going to come. It can't be stopped now."

Tengo's attempts to concentrate solely on his studies and complete his matric are in vain. With Soweto going up in flames, and all around him students organising school boycotts under the slogan 'Liberation first! Education after!', Tengo's own experience of police and army brutality triggers an intense personal struggle about what to do. Through Joseph, who finally reveals to Tengo that he is an organiser for the African National Congress, Tengo is offered the possibility of crossing the border to join the A.N.C. He could then either continue his education abroad, be trained for a trade, or go for military training, returning into the country later as a freedom fighter. Frikkie meanwhile, having finished school, has been conscripted into the South African Army, but looks forward to the day when he can leave dealing with troublesome "kaffirs" for the peace of farm life.

Almost inevitably, the author brings Frikkie and Tengo together in the very heat of the rebellion for a final confrontation. For the first time Tengo, for once in a position of physical power, speaks his mind to an uncomprehending Frikkie, confronting him with his complicity in a system designed to destroy all reasonable expectations of life for those who are not white. Although Tengo releases Frikkie into the uncertainties of night in Soweto, he hides the gun he has taken off Frikkie to be collected later by Joseph. He has made his decision to make the dangerous trip across the border with Joseph, first to continue his education.

The novel seems to me to have a two-fold strength. The structure is one designed to keep shifting the reader from one

boy's perspective to the other's. While the book begins with the view through Frikkie's eyes, the reader is increasingly shifted into Tengo's consciousness - the structure thus reflecting Tengo's increasing awareness, contrasted sharply with Frikkie's psychological blindness. The second strength is that most of the white protagonists are not portrayed as intrinsically mean or unpleasant. Racism is thus not located in personal individual characteristics. It is located firmly in a system which gives one group unbridled power over another. As in Friedrich and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, in Waiting for the Rain there is the potential to explore dimensions of racism beyond those of personal attitude. I felt that an attempt to understand Joseph's perspective on the friendly, liberal Millers would indicate the potential to perceive this fundamental dimension of power. I was interested to know whether the difficulties which students had experienced in understanding the Logans' wariness of Jeremy in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry would be reflected here in a feeling that Joseph was being too harsh on the Millers, and Tengo too harsh on Frikkie at the end of the novel.

Activities related to the novel

As described in the previous chapter, prior to reading Waiting for the Rain, the students attended a science session on classification with the intention of encouraging them to question the notion of 'race' as a scientific biological construct. Soon afterwards they viewed part of a schools' documentary on South Africa (BBC Scene, 1988) giving information about the origins of apartheid and the system of 'race' classification. This was followed by group discussions in response to the sheet entitled "What is 'race'?" (Appendix 8.1). As mentioned previously, this not only comprised an extract of contorted definitions from the South African Population Registration Act but featured a newspaper article of an abandoned South African baby which was not allowed to be adopted as doctors could not determine to which 'race' she belonged.

Before reading Waiting for the Rain the students also read and discussed my own book Journey to Jo'burg. Through the eyes of two young black children searching for their mother who works far away in the city, readers are introduced to some of the basic realities of apartheid. However the students were allocated only one hour for silent reading and many journal comments revealed that the sense of being rushed had stopped them fully absorbing and responding to the story. I was away at this point and at the time the students were still not aware of my being the author. Other activities involved comparing two versions of South African history (Appendices 9.1, 9.2); watching a film Girls Apart (Sheppard and Sauvageot, 1987) featuring two South African sixteen-year-olds - one black, one white - talking about their lives, views and aspirations; and listening at the end of the novel to a taped interview I had carried out with Sheila Gordon, author of Waiting for the Rain, in the summer of 1988. In addition six boys held a discussion in response to a Christian Aid sheet about a black South African woman living in exile in Britain (Appendix 9.3). As I knew the author they were able to make a tape with questions for her to answer. Her taped reply arrived close to the end of term and it was only possible to play it at lunch-time to the small group of students concerned rather than the whole class.

In drama the students continued to focus on questions of status and power, developing the role play of inter-school conflict which they had begun while reading Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. However as this was the final term and time was running out to address the British context, the last few drama sessions were focused more directly on issues of migration relating to the Caribbean and Britain.

Apart from journal writing, activities based directly on Waiting for the Rain consisted of responding to the cover picture as well as to three specific passages. The first two involved 'thought-tracking' Joseph and Tengo: Joseph at the

point where he is beginning to feel critical of the Millers (Appendix 9.4) and Tengo after Frikkie says he wants him to be his "boss-boy" when they are older (Appendix 9.5). In the third passage, Joseph spells out to Tengo three possibilities if he leaves the country and joins the African National Congress - to study, to learn a trade, or to undergo military training (Appendix 9.6). The students were asked to advise Tengo on what he should do. However before examining what these responses revealed of the students' perceptions and sympathies, I wish to focus on some possibilities within the novel of raising questions of language and power.

Language and power

As mentioned in the last chapter, a number of students appeared puzzled about how the science session linked to their English course. It was left to the students themselves to make the connection, particularly as their teacher had only been present for a short part of the session. Michelle's journal comments revealed her beginning to connect the activities in the science session with the process of language:

"I didn't see what it had to do with English... It wasn't until the end that I realised what it had to do with English. We had been putting everything into groups and giving them a name. Well the blacks and whites were put into groups as well because of their colour."

Although Michelle did not go quite so far, there was clearly the potential within the science/English link to explore issues of language and power. Having engaged in classification themselves, it would have been useful for the students to have reflected initially on themselves as classifiers. Waiting for the Rain, in which the reader is constantly shifting between Frikkie's and Tengo's perspectives, is a rich resource for exploring the role of language in relation to power. In particular, the novel offers a way in to feeling the effect of derogatory classifications. An interesting example of this was provided by Michelle (the girl with the highest female score on the Racist Perceptions Scale). Her initial responses to the novel suggested a certain distance:

re. the cover - "It's about blacks and whites again! We seem to be doing a lot about them."

re. Chapter One - "In this book the white is learning from the blacks. I am surprised that they asocsiate together, because blacks and whites don't usually do that... They both seem to be equal to each other for once."

However, by the third chapter she was revealing involvement:

"I think it's not fair that Tengo should be only boss-boy. Boss-boy will probably be the same as what he is now. When Frikkie owns the farm... Tengo and him won't get on at all. Tengo won't like the way Frikkie bosses him about, and they'll probably turn into enemies... Tengo has obviously got his skill for clay from his ancestors - I think his tribe were on the land first, and the whites came in immediately and took it over."

Michelle's response here seemed to be grounded in a sense of unfairness and a strong reaction against 'bossing'. This could be seen in her reaction against Frikkie's sister Sissie who "thinks she's the boss" and their red-haired girl cousin who spoke rudely to the old servant Ezekiel:

"I thought it was a real cheek for that girl to call Ezekiel an old man - boy. Tengo was furious and I would've been as well."

Later on in her journal she returned to the issue of names, commenting on the use of language for purposes of power:

"Tengo's aunt is called a 'tea-girl'. I don't see why she can't be called a 'tea-lady', it is just like when the red haired girl called Ezekiel 'boy'. I think it's because adults have power over children by calling them boy and girl. But adults don't have power over adults. So I think for the white people to feel they have power they call blacks by boy and girl. I think it gives them satisfaction for now they can have power by calling the blacks this."

Michelle is not correct in thinking that adults do not have power over other adults or that the actual basis of adults' power over children is "by calling them boy and girl". The implication here is that the power is manufactured simply by the use of language. Nevertheless the issue was one which captured Michelle's attention and this journal entry suggests that she was attempting to internalise the argument about how language can be used as a means of oppression, following a brief class discussion led by the teacher on the effect of

using the terms 'boy' and 'girl'. We need, however, to be able to help students explore not only how language can function to preserve power but how it is itself a function of power. Tengo's aunt was called 'girl' and the old man Ezekiel called 'boy' - even by a white child - because the white community had effective power over them.

Most of the students, however, did not make any comment on the issue in their journals and would have benefited from a more concentrated focus on language and power in ways that actively drew on their own experience. Responses to the word 'kaffir' suggested that more was needed than a general class discussion to deconstruct its meaning and function. In the early part of the book, the word 'kaffir' is used by Frikkie's family as a normal term of reference for black people. It is only when Frikkie's uncle shouts at Tengo "you lazy kaffir" (Chapter 5) that his tone directly reveals abuse. The teacher deliberately delayed discussing the word until this point in the text where the contempt was explicit rather than implicit and the reader was clearly meant to be placed with Tengo at the point of impact. In the class discussion and subsequent journal comments, a number of students revealed that they had been unaware of the word's abusive connotations until that point. For instance, Alison who was always extremely sensitive wrote:

"The word 'Kaffir' I hadn't thought of it as being an abusive word until now when the oubaas shouted at Tengo. I thought it was just a harmless word but I definately think in this incident it is meant abusively."

Although Alison placed the word 'kaffir' in quotation marks, it was disconcerting to find a number of students using the word without them. In one of the response sheets connected with Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry the students' attention had been drawn specifically to the function of quotation marks in relation to the word 'nigger', but not all the students had followed the injunction to use them. In most cases where students used the word 'kaffir' it was when writing about white perceptions e.g.

"I think Oom Koos was being really racist when he says that no kaffirs could ever work any type of machinery well." (Tanya)

"the whites say the kaffirs brake machinery" (Peter)

It was my feeling that neither Tanya nor Peter actually wanted to identify with the contempt implicit in 'kaffir' and that they and other students needed to be involved in more specific 'knowledge about language' activity in order to learn how to use quotation marks as a distancing mechanism. The class discussion on the word focused on the speaker's intention and the context in which a particular word is used - for instance whether it is possible ever to use a word like 'Paki' without it being offensive. However I felt it would have required more time and active participation for the students to be able really to grasp the issues. In addition, although the teacher had a specific reason for delaying the discussion, in the meantime the word 'kaffir' may well have been gaining a kind of legitimacy. Andrew, with his South African experience, acknowledged in discussion that he had been aware the word was abusive from the beginning. Indeed I had seen him grinning whenever it had come up in the text. As seen in the previous chapter he had used the word with what seemed to be a certain relish in the group discussion on 'race' classification (Chapter 9: 230). I felt the same pleasure was evident in his substitution of 'nigger' for 'kaffir' when later in his journal he wrote that Frikkie's uncle "feels that niggers are not better than a white and the only way to teach them is by force."

Another student who seemed to be deliberately using the term 'kaffir' was Ian. As indicated earlier in discussing some of his responses to Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, I felt Ian was increasingly intent on disparaging things that were challenging his racist frames of reference. By the third chapter of Waiting for the Rain he had written "The book is

already starting to dwell on black and white hardships. This subject is starting to drag on and get very boring." His comment after the discussion of 'kaffir' once again revealed his skill at casual contempt:

"when the word kaffirs is used it's read offensively like it is for one of your niggers."

Had Ian been asked to spell out what he meant by "one of your niggers", I suspect he would have been elusive, insisting that he was referring to someone else's terminology and not his own. However he continued to repeat the term 'kaffir' as if it was a word in normal usage, despite commenting that "All the way through the book kaffir has changed its meaning from light-hearted to insulting." His conception of 'kaffir' being used initially in a "light-hearted" way was revealing and would seem to link with his notion (expressed in relation to the Racist Perceptions Scale and during the 'Media Week') that racist jokes were 'just a bit of fun'. For a student like Ian, seeing racist language in print probably provided extra scope for articulating his own racism while providing the 'cover' that he was simply using words from the text.

The question of handling racist terminology within literature is a difficult one for a teacher where there is no immediate counter to it within the text. In Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry the shop-keeper's insult "Whose little nigger is this?" receives an instant retort from Cassie "I ain't nobody's little nigger!" (Chapter 5). The reader is also clearly placed with Cassie on the receiving - and therefore rejecting - end of the abuse. However the structure of Waiting for the Rain means that the reader has a shifting perspective, sometimes hearing the racist abuse without there being an immediate critique. Is it sufficient for the teacher to wait until the abuse is countered later within the text - for instance, when the reader is taken into Tengo's perspective, and specifically at the end of the book when Tengo confronts Frikkie with his acceptance of the term 'kaffir', amongst all the other injustices he has simply accepted? Should the teacher not

attempt, without becoming didactic, to enable the students to be critically aware of the connotations of the abuse at the time it occurs? Although there may be little chance of affecting a student with such marked racist frames of reference as Ian, this approach would at least not imply a kind of legitimacy for the abuse through lack of comment.

The project students did in fact become actively involved in deconstructing bias when they undertook the exercise comparing two versions of South African history. This was linked to the part in the novel where Tengo listens to Frikkie's uncle tell his Afrikaner version of the 'Great Trek'. The students were first given a page of a text (Appendix 9.1) in which South Africa's history appeared to begin with 'discovery' by Europeans, portrayed very positively in terms of 'settling' and 'building' the country. In contrast the country's indigenous black inhabitants were portrayed as 'wandering' around, prone to fighting the Europeans, and generally being a 'problem'. The teacher read the passage in a straight tone before asking whether it seemed a reasonable account. While a couple of students commented that the text was perhaps a bit simplified and Jacky said that it "sounds a bit one-sided", no-one strongly contested that the text might be biased or contain anything untrue. They were then given another version to read (Appendix 9.2) - one specifically written by the black writer Chris van Wyk to counter the white perspective which has predominated in historical accounts for children. Initial responses from a few students indicated that they felt the second passage told them more about what really happened. In the class discussion which followed students began to point out omissions and distortions in the first piece. There was a focus for instance on the difference between saying that South Africa was 'discovered' and that it was 'invaded'. When Alan Parsons finally revealed that the passage being criticised for its distortion was from the Children's Encyclopedia Britannica, in as recent an edition as 1985, there was obvious surprise, the strongest reaction being voiced by Angela. The

teacher allocated a further session for the students to work in pairs, looking more closely for evidence of bias within the language, and both the teacher and I felt these language-focused sessions were very productive.

Given more time this kind of work could have been extended to more explicit considerations of language and power and questions about whose versions of history predominate and how young people are generally inducted into an 'accepted' version. What was needed was time and space for students to reflect on how their own perceptions were being constructed by the language around them and the language they themselves used.

Responses to criticism of white liberals

As indicated earlier, I was particularly interested to find out about how students would respond to Joseph's critique of the liberal Miller family as well as to the conflict between Frikkie and Tengo. In the first passage from the text to which they were asked to make a specific response, Joseph remains silent when his mother clearly expects him to thank her white 'Madam' for paying for his train ticket after being sent to recuperate on the farm where his cousin Tengo lived, after an illness. The Madam's manner is benevolent and the author subtly signifies the power relationship behind the affability. For example Mrs Miller complains of the heat in the kitchen because of the oven and asks Joseph's mother, Matilda, to bring her a tray of tea by the swimming pool. Matilda's place is, of course, to remain at work in the kitchen. The students were asked to write Joseph's thoughts at this point, hence giving an indication of how sensitive they were to his inner resentment.

Once again the gender difference in responses appeared rather striking. Only a third of the boys showed some recognition of Joseph's growing sense of injustice and only one boy (Carl) identified these feelings as Joseph's major pre-occupation at

this point. In sharp contrast more than four-fifths of the girls indicated understanding, most of them also showing sympathy for how Joseph was feeling.

A couple of students openly expressed the view that the Millers deserved gratitude from Joseph. Amongst the girls Jacky seemed distinctly unsympathetic to Joseph's feelings. In the thought-tracking exercise she felt Joseph's silence revealed jealousy. His mother was "taking more notice of 'Madam'" than of him and she was more concerned about Tengo getting a box of books from the Millers instead of giving all her attention to her son. In her subsequent journal comment she wrote: "I thought Joseph was very ungrateful to the Millers he may be jealous of them."

Dan, too, regarded Joseph as rather ungrateful and "selfish":

"I feel quite hardened by the thought of blacks having bad conditions to travel in but even worse, its because of my race... It was very kind of Madam to give Tengo some books. Matilda is quite lucky not to have racist Masters. I think that at the end of this chapter Joseph was becoming a bit selfish by not thanking his mother's Master for paying his train fare."

On the surface there appeared to be some contradiction in Dan's responses. On the one hand he recognised "bad conditions" for black people - and somehow felt implicated because he was white - but he couldn't understand Joseph's resentment because his 'Madam' and 'Master' were "kind". However these responses are reconcilable within a conception of racism concerned purely with personal attitudes and not to do with social structures. Dan did not relate the Millers to the "bad conditions" because they were "kind" and not "racist Masters". In that way presumably he could deal with the uncomfortable feelings within himself and distance himself from what he identified as racism i.e. the "bad conditions" for black people which would have been the fault of unkind racists. This locating of racism solely in individuals who specifically articulate racist ideas seemed to be borne out elsewhere in Dan's journal e.g.

"The postmistress is a racist person and I'm surprised that Oom Koos [Frikkie's uncle] didn't say anything...
"Sissie seems like a spoilt brat and is fussy about everything. She also seems to be quite a racist person."

Dan did not appear to see how all the white characters were locked into a racist system, regardless of personality. Although he occasionally showed glimmerings of understanding, he did not follow these through. While writing "I'm beginning to see how, in this book, there is a distinct separation in equality between blacks and whites", he did not seem able - or willing - to take on the implications. When Tengo's ambition to get his matric was thwarted by the student protests, Dan was unable to combine his sympathy for Tengo with an understanding of the school boycotters' perspective. To him they were "selfish because their forcing children to finish school with nothing. No certificates for their exams. When all this boycotting is over, what will happen to the kids who couldn't do their matric and they need a job." This unwillingness to recognise the wider social ramifications of racism - and therefore the need for wider social action to dismantle it - was not limited to Dan. Locating racism in society has far more uncomfortable implications for everyone than simply locating it in certain individuals.

A few students did however appear to confront themselves with Joseph's view of the Millers. Alison wrote very honestly: "I never saw it from Joseph's point of view they were white liberals but when Joseph said about the golf club I had to think again about the Millers." Hannah was another student who appeared in some way to be challenged by Joseph's perspective, although this did not occur until later in the book. Her responses to the younger and older Joseph make an interesting contrast. In her response to him as a child watching his mother work in the Miller's house, although she identified that he "was probably wondering why they [the Millers] could have all of this money" she still clearly saw the Millers as

kind and imagined Joseph would simply think of them as "lucky":

"I don't think he would think along the lines that as 'they' are white in Africa, this makes a huge difference."

It would seem that Hannah had not properly taken in the signs of Joseph's awareness of discrimination and oppression that are already evident in his conversation with Tengo about apartheid while on the farm. However later on in the book when he is older and comments sharply to Tengo about the Miller's idealistic daughter Claire, Hannah acknowledged feeling challenged by what he said:

"When Tengo goes back to the township he meets Joseph who lectures to him the ways of the whites. Tengo tells him about Claire who wants to make an ideal township where there is no fights and violence, just peace. Claire's definition sounded an ideal place to live, but Joseph put it in a totally different light altogether. I was quite astonished at all the points he told Tengo about."

Hannah did not indicate to what extent her perceptions might have actually changed as a result of Joseph's points, but her words "but Joseph put it in a totally different light altogether" certainly suggested a new awareness.

There was an interesting example of a student showing empathy with the young Joseph in the 'thought-tracking' exercise (carried out in class) but then indicating more reserve in her subsequent journal comment (for homework). In writing Joseph's thoughts, Gaby imagined him to be strongly resentful of oppression:

"How come they have got so much money anyway I don't want to have anything to do with them. How do they know that I want to say thank-you for the train ticket it is always the same us people having to lick the boots of other people and except charity... That Madam seems very bossy and always likes her own way she might be very nice to give books to Tengo but she proably always thinks of herself first and if anyone needs to go for a swim my mother does. she has been working all day over a hot stove..."

In her journal comment however Gaby revealed a certain conflict:

"To me I thought or I had a good opinion of the Millers but for the same reason Joseph has got something against them or maybe he is just jealous because of the money."

I should have liked to have been able to ask Gaby to think through her conflicting feelings in relation to the Millers and not evade the problem by reducing Joseph's response simply to one of jealousy, when she already knew it to be much more complex. It is particularly at points like this that one can see the value of running a journal system which allows for a private dialogue between student and teacher. I should have wished also to be able to ask Louise to probe further into the duality she expressed in: "I suppose Dr Miller is a reasonable kind person to work for... but he believes that he has a right to have black servants."

Only one student explicitly suggested the Millers' attitudes and perspective might have something to do with power:

"I think that the whites who Joseph's mother works for must have some good reason for paying for their books and education, maybe if the blacks rise to power over whites they can't get treated badly."

Perhaps Peter's conception of the Millers was simplistic and somewhat Machiavellian, denying any genuine humanitarian feelings on their part. Nevertheless he touched on the concept of power.

It seemed to me that a number of students had the potential to break out from a conception of racism constricted to one of personal hostility. Given the right pointers and the space to explore the issues, I felt there were students who might have come to an understanding that the English Millers, like Frikkie's Afrikaner family, could not escape the moral implications of benefitting from a system of inequality and racist power. However, in the only class discussion about Joseph's view of the Millers (following Joseph's critique of Claire Millers' designs for an "ideal planned community"), Alan Parsons focused almost entirely on the white perspective. He began by asking the students "What's your attitude towards his [Joseph's] attitude towards the white liberals?" When

there was no immediate response he elaborated by asking them how they would feel about "the Millers' nice home being turned over to a public building of some sort." Responses to this included that "it would be vandalised" (Philip) and that "it would be like what the Nazis did to the Jews" (Marco). When Jacky proposed that it would not work out because too many people would want the houses and there would not be the money to keep them up, the teacher asked what the Bolsheviki had done to private property in Russia. With Angela speaking about how "they let it out to everybody.. everybody started living in it" and Michael declaring that the rich houses had been smashed up in the rebellion so there was nothing left, Graham brought the discussion back to South Africa:

GRAHAM: That's what the blacks will do.. destroy it, smash the windows and things.

A.P.: You think that will be a bad thing?

GRAHAM: Yes.

A.P.: How do you think the Millers would feel if they were listening to this conversation?

GRAHAM: I think they'd feel angry because the blacks don't realise that they are actually trying to help them in some ways and they just think that they don't do anything.

A.P.: They'd be angry because it's not showing any sensitivity to them trying to help?

IAN: After all they've done for them, they'd be a bit sort of shocked that they would do it back to them.

A.P.: Miranda?

MARION: They'd probably stop helping them because they would think they were going to go down with all the others.

Instead of Joseph's speech being used to explore his expression of frustration and oppression, the teacher used it solely to open out white fears about revolution. He neither offered nor elicited from the students any critique of these, for instance not even questioning the statement that "it'll be like what the Nazis did to the Jews". From the focus he created it would appear that he himself felt sympathy with the Millers and little with Joseph at this point. Once again, as in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry the teacher appeared constricted by an essentially white, albeit liberal, perspective. He too was bound into the Millers' paternalism and was unable to encourage the students to see beyond it.

Responses towards the novel's central black and white characters

In the final chapter of the novel Frikkie and Tengo confront each other as young men - Frikkie as a soldier and Tengo as a student protester. Frikkie is injured and for the first time in Tengo's life their positions of power are temporarily reversed. Tengo uses the opportunity to tell Frikkie what he really thinks. In order to discover how the students perceived the conflict, they were asked to stop reading just before the author's resolution of the crisis and to write a personal statement both to Tengo and to Frikkie indicating any support or criticism. These statements - only some of which were written directly in the first person to each character - provided a clear picture of where the student's sympathies lay at that point.

In broad terms, apart from two girls whose sympathies seemed fairly evenly divided, all the girls present supported Tengo rather than Frikkie. However most included some minor qualifications which I shall discuss later. In contrast less than a third of the boys shared this perspective, with a third clearly feeling closer to Frikkie and a couple feeling rather divided. The remaining boys gave the impression of being undecided.

The student offering the most straight-forward support to Frikkie was Andrew, the boy who had lived in South Africa and defended apartheid in the group discussion about 'race' classification. Not only was his support unqualified but he added a couple of traditional white South African justifications for racist supremacy:

"Tengo is being unfair to Frikkie. I think that if the whites didn't take Africa the blacks would probably still be fighting and wouldn't have gone forwards in technology... Frikkie and the whites should be worried because there are more blacks than whites."

It is worth recalling that Andrew scored towards the non-racist end of the Racist Perceptions Scale, indicating either his ability to cover up views he identified as

'unacceptable' to teachers, or that the survey simply didn't tap in to his particular forms of racist thinking.

In the previous lesson's class discussion Ian had shown strong sympathy for Frikkie, speaking about his being "trapped" by not being allowed to gain his own knowledge. His statement seemed to have potential for real learning. If he was able to see Frikkie as someone whose perceptions were largely constructed for him, perhaps this could lead to questioning of how his own views may have been shaped. In the group discussion on 'race classification' he had also spoken of young people being confused by conflicting adult conceptions. However, while I would have expected Ian to show support for Frikkie in this final conflict, his response was quite enigmatic:

"I think that I'm drawn towards Tengo and what I would say to him is urge him on and make him hate Frikkie so much that he killed him. I wouldn't say anything at all to Frikkie because I think he is still dreaming and doesn't even know what reality is."

Perhaps Ian simply wrote this provocatively as a 'send up', in order to create deliberate ambiguity. It is difficult to find another explanation.

John (the boy with the highest score on the first Racist Perceptions Scale) was quite open in his support for Frikkie:

"To Frikkie: Frikkie don't give up. you want that farm and its rightly yours. you couldn't help what happened between black and whites... don't you see he's just trying to get at you but don't let him. stand up for yourself. he hit you!

To Tengo: Tengo ease of abit alright so he was blind in seeing about how you got treated on the farm. well your going of to another country aren't you. if you can't have it why should you not let Frikkie get it your being abit selfish!"

A number of boys suggested that the discrimination against Tengo was not Frikkie's fault. Their reasoning was reminiscent of that given mainly by boys in exonerating the narrator's parents from responsibility for the outcomes of Nazism in Friedrich. Tony, for instance, wrote:

"I feel sympathetic to Frikkie, because its not his fault that he has to do these things [in the army] I think that just because Tengo has learnt about these new things, he feels angered to any white person. Frikkie seems to be enclosed by Tengo's anger. I think that some of Tengo's statements are true."

Tony appeared to credit the truth of at least some of what Tengo was saying but once again, the problem seemed to be acknowledging how someone like Frikkie was not simply an individual but inextricably linked with his society. Philip's attitude shared some similarity, judging from his statement that Frikkie did not make the laws:

"I would tell Tengo not to be so hard on Frikkie because Frikkie didn't make the laws and Tengo thinks he is a victim but in a way Frikkie is a victim as well because of the way he has to go to school but Tengo doesn't have to. And Frikkie has to do military service but Tengo doesn't."

Philip's notion of Frikkie as a victim on the grounds that he did not have to go to school appeared grounded in a child's perspective. He was clearly not thinking of Frikkie as a victim of a racist system in the sense that the human relationships open to those from the oppressor class are severely constricted. This probably involved a degree of abstraction difficult for most fourteen year olds to grasp.

Over a third of the students, both boys and girls including those largely sympathetic to Tengo, spoke of him 'over-reacting', going a bit 'over the top' or being a bit 'petty', 'selfish' or 'unreasonable'. Given the author's depiction of Tengo as extremely reflective and restrained, this seemed to indicate something significant about the students' own frames of reference:

"Tengo is right in what he said to Frikkie, but I think he is going a bit over the top. It is not all Frikkie's fault the way he was brought up, so I think he believes what he was taught when he was younger... Tengo had been unfair in some of the things he said, but Frikkie still didn't relise some things." (Michelle)

"I think that I would of agreed with Tengo on some of his remarks of how Frikkie never understood what he had to live and put up with, but I did think that some of his remarks were a bit selfish because it was not always

Frikkie's fault... the blacks are in the right and the whites although they might think they are doing good are making more mistakes in society." (Gaby)

"I think that Tengo is being a bit unreasonable expecting Frikkie to understand, but I think that Frikkie is stubborn, he could try to understand. I think I would back up everything Tengo has said... You expect Frikkie to defend himself and stick up for his people, but he doesn't understand how Tengo's people feel and how they are treated." (Louise)

"Tengo should cool down a bit. He is trying to say alot of his problems about whites to Frikkie but he shouldn't be saying it is his fault all the time, although it's the people like Frikkie that Tengo really hates... Tengo is being a little bit petty but he has got reason too. I would tend to take Tengo's side." (Caroline)

In these examples, it could be seen how even students supportive of Tengo felt it necessary to balance a view in which the criticism fell heavily on Frikkie for having participated in an oppressive system. As an individual Frikkie is clearly a friendly, sympathetic character but the author asks us to acknowledge that a warm, attractive individual can at the same time participate in perpetuating an oppressive society. Indeed that is the tragedy of the relationship between Tengo and Frikkie. Without the inequality they could have been good friends. An essential factor for grasping this idea is the concept of how an individual is at the same time part of a society in which she or he plays a role. It was my feeling that many students saw Frikkie and Tengo only as individuals. Instead of being able to acknowledge the tragedy of Frikkie's involvement in the system oppressing Tengo, they remained fixed on interpreting the relationship on a purely personal level. In those terms Tengo was being unfair to blame Frikkie. This way of viewing the relationship between the two protagonists bore a strong resemblance to how the relationship between the Logan children and Jeremy in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry was generally conceived - without a proper appreciation of the dimension of power which unavoidably separated the two parties.

Nevertheless the students sympathetic to Tengo showed the potential to develop a wider social understanding, had there been the direction and space to explore the issues further. Amongst the students themselves were those who touched on questions about Frikkie's responsibility as a member of an oppressive society. Erica, for instance, seemed to be pointing to the fact that Tengo and Frikkie were more than individuals, fulfilling certain social roles:

"I would back Tengo but he did go abit far in some places. Frikkie however didn't understand one bit of what Tengo was saying. 'Violence is caused by the law' Tengo had said. 'I don't make the law' Frikkie replied but he is keeping it (law) is what I would say to Frikkie. If they changed around then I bet Frikkie would put in exactly the same argument as Tengo is and Tengo would put in the same as Frikkie is."

A particularly interesting response came from Peter, the boy who had been so clearly challenged during Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Millie Murray into considering whether Jeremy's connections to his racist family and society could simply be ignored in developing a relationship with the Logans. Peter showed himself torn between Frikkie and Tengo as individuals. Furthermore he indicated his awareness of a feeling from some of the class as well as the teacher that Tengo was being "too harsh" on Frikkie. Nevertheless he raised for himself an important question about responsibility and age:

"I've found it hard to go on either side with Tengo or Frikkie because of their faults or understanding. Like Frikkie didn't understand a lot of what was being said even at twenty, so I find this his fault. So I am tending to go on Tengo's side a lot more but even so Mr. Parsons and some of the class said Tengo was being too harsh on Frikkie with not understanding. But I think seeing their both about twenty it's no excuse for Frikkie not to understand."

Angela also addressed the issue of 'harshness', expressing the view that "I think Tengo is right in nearly all he says and although he is harsh he needs to be because Frikkie can't see what's happening... he is right when he says that the land belongs to all those who live in it black or white."

Another student who, like Peter, directly confronted the question not only of her feelings but of Frikkie's responsibility was Alison. Her responses to Waiting for the Rain, as with the other novels, were fulsome and honest. In the course of the novel she continually challenged herself to think through the issues, not recording neat and tidy thoughts but the various ways in which her responses were pulling her. On a number of occasions for instance she returned to the question of violence, noting that "Even though I don't like violence I think I would fight for freedom." Earlier on in the novel she had commented that Frikkie reminded her sometimes of Jeremy, adding that "I feel quite sorry for Frikkie sometimes, the same way I felt sorry for Jeremy." By the final chapter, however, after increasingly experiencing Tengo's perspective, the complexity of her responses had deepened considerably:

"I'm glad Tengo hit him over the head maybe it will knock some sense into him. Frikkie did have a choice he didn't have to join the army he could have gone to another country or help the black people. I think Tengo is right. I don't think he's being too hard on Frikkie, I think he deserves everything he gets. 'We're not to blame' well if they are not to blame who is? If I was Tengo I would feel angry like him, I would also say all those things. Tengo is the one with power now not Frikkie. It's got everything to do with Frikkie. I don't know how Frikkie couldn't have noticed the difference in the plates. What sort of things have the white people done that are good? In my opinion nothing, well there might be some white people who should be given credit for trying to help. I think Tengo is hoping too much because I don't think that the black people will take over the country completely. Frikkie seems very frightened, not that I care. I don't think Tengo hates Frikkie. I think Tengo threw the rocks etc. to let out his anger and hate. The amount of soldiers killed is about 3 to every 100 of black people killed. What I'd say to Tengo would be to help Frikkie but in some places he has gone a little too far and over the top. But I would support him. To Frikkie I would be against in some places but also feel a little sympathetic because Tengo is blaming him for everything. I don't support Frikkie even though I feel sympathetic towards him. I even feel anger towards Frikkie because of his stupidity, but I don't feel hate towards him though."

Alison appeared to resolve her conflicting emotions through finally making a distinction between feeling sympathetic towards Frikkie but not supporting his position and ideas.

Furthermore her sympathy for him did not preclude anger "because of his stupidity". Out of all the students Alison seemed to come the closest to expressing a realisation of the tragedy for both Frikkie and Tengo of living under a racist system.

Final reflections

In their final reflections on the book many students wrote positively about what they felt they had learnt. Graham, for instance, wrote how he had enjoyed it and "it explained to me the hatred and torcher the blacks went through and are still going through." Neil had found it "slow to get going but then interesting. The whole book was full of things I didn't know about." Marco had found it "very interesting... I liked the fact that the positions of power had swapped from Frikkie to Tengo by the means of the gun. The book shows what it's like to be black in South Africa." While Julia felt parts had been difficult to relate to - perhaps because she felt they had to read the book too fast without there being enough time for it to "sink in" - she nevertheless said:

"The book has made me understand racism much more and I know now more about the trouble racism can cause."

On the other hand Jacky, who found the language easier than in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and enjoyed it more, wrote:

"Most of the time I could relate to the book and saw both sides of the arguments - Frikkie's and Tengo's. The book made me think quite a bit about the world today and how it has changed. But I expect I will soon forget. Now I think coloured people are treated much better than they were."

There appeared an element of slight defensiveness in her last sentence, written perhaps as some kind of justification for the casually honest admission "I expect I will soon forget."

The only student to express an extremely negative reaction to the book was Ian. It was apparent from his review that his response was deeply rooted within his increasing resistance to exploring anything to do with racism:

"the book was a bit of a encyclopedia written in a book form to give facts. I didn't find anything to relate to."

All I found to relate to was Tengo but for no reason I found the book boring because every book we have read this year is either against or for some race or colour. After a while the books started getting boring. I wish that half way through we could of had a light book not factual... I would of preferred to have done a USUAL ENGLISH year instead of research."

Ian's conception of "USUAL ENGLISH" requires further examination and I shall return to this later. It would appear that he was appealing to the teacher's underlying view, which became increasingly apparent over the year, that exploring issues of racism and challenging racist perceptions was not really 'English'. Ian's simplistic perception that Waiting for the Rain was a book in favour of Tengo and against Frikkie contrasted sharply with the complexity of Alison's response and it was not surprising that these two students should have scored at the opposite ends of the Racist Perceptions Scale. As in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry there was evidence of racist frames of reference distorting perceptions in the transaction between writer and reader.

While there was also evidence of shifting frames of reference and examples of re-perception through responding to and reflecting on texts, this did not take quite the dramatic form suggested by Dan's view that Waiting for the Rain would actually cause people to "change sides":

"this book has given me a greater look into the problem of South Africa and also racism. I'm glad we read this book because some people who read this book, who've always been on the white's side would change sides and help the blacks because the whites stole their land and the blacks were there first. If I had the chance I'd go to South Africa and I'd try and become part of the Government and have equality between blacks and whites. I'm surprised that the Government hasn't done anything."

Whatever the naivete and limitations of Dan's conceptions (for example, about the nature of 'the Government' and his own ability to affect it), possibly he felt that he himself had undergone some change. However his statement has none of the personal force suggested by that of Louise:

"It made me feel angry and embaressed to admit to myself that my South African cousins are like that. They hate black people and don't have anything to do with them, they cross the road so that they don't have to walk past or look at a black person. It's disgusting the way black people are treated, after all, it is their country and white people took over the country and we treated them as heroes, as great explorers, when really they were invaders."

Louise's statement is significantly different from Dan's in the degree to which she acknowledges involvement. Having South African cousins seemed to have helped her make the connection. She did not simply write about white people taking over the country as a distant fact, but acknowledged that "we treated them as heroes". Reading Waiting for the Rain had made her "admit" to herself attitudes within her own family. It appeared to have engaged her in a dialogue with herself which is surely an integral part of personal change.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: APPROACHES THROUGH DRAMA - "CAN YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND IT?"

Focus of the chapter in relation to the year's drama work

The weekly drama lessons, for alternating halves of the class, were linked to the project throughout the year, with the intention that the students explore issues of justice in a range of personal and social contexts. In addition to these lessons with their English teacher Alan Parsons, there were workshops with visiting artists Richard Finch, Millie Murray and Olusola Oyeleye, as well with another drama teacher from the school, Elly Williams. The students were thus briefly introduced to a variety of approaches to drama.

From the outline of the various activities and themes (Appendix 10.1), it can be seen that connections with the central texts were frequently indirect. It was hoped that the students would begin to make links for themselves. However the major part of this chapter will deal with those sessions most closely connected to the literature, namely those involving 'hotseating' characters from the novels. In this drama technique, an individual assumes the role of a particular character and is interviewed 'in role' by others in the group. Both questions and replies can be revealing about the perceptual frames of the participants. A major reason for this particular focus on the hotseating sessions is that the texts provided a fixed point of reference for the students' interpretations. Before turning to this area, however, I wish first to indicate the perspective from which I have viewed educational drama and the difficulties in making valid assessments of what is happening within drama to student perceptions. I also wish to focus briefly on a small piece of evidence in which two students appeared to use some of their personal experience of a couple of drama sessions to inform their understanding of wider social issues.

Educational drama

The term 'drama' covers a wide and complex range of activities. Bolton (1979), for instance, describes four different orientations of educational drama. Type A refers essentially to drama exercises with structured form and short-term, pre-determined objectives - for example demonstration of a particular idea or principle. Type B refers to 'dramatic playing' which is far more loosely structured and spontaneous than a Type A 'exercise' and in which participants engage in 'living-through' experiences in contrast to 'demonstration'. Type C refers to a theatre or performance orientation, where again the form is structured and the participants are encouraged to be conscious of how they are appearing to others. Each of these types has its strengths and weaknesses. For instance, dramatic playing, while allowing the participants more freedom and control over the direction of the drama can become characterised by a fairly shallow level of thought, influenced chiefly by considerations of 'what happens next'. However a teacher may be able to use elements of dramatic exercise and theatre in order to deepen the participants' experience within dramatic playing. When this happens the drama moves towards what Bolton calls 'drama for understanding', or Type D. He describes this as a special combination of the previous three types in which the primary concern is 'internal action' - that is what participants are thinking and feeling - and, particularly, shifts in internal action. Bolton distinguishes this from the 'external action' which can be directly observed both in terms of actual movements or behaviour and in terms of the concrete make-believe context being represented. The meaning of the drama for the participants, however, rests in the underlying 'internal action'.

Bolton further outlines four stages towards change in understanding. At the first stage of 'artificial drama', verbalisation reflects an intellectual understanding which is devoid of feeling and where emotion is imitated rather than

felt. At the second stage, the drama is a replay of what the participants already know but does not move beyond reinforcement of this knowledge. Dramatic playing often tends to be of the 'what happened next' variety and is therefore, according to Bolton, of no educational value in terms of drama and enabling shifts in the 'internal action'. Stage three involves clarification, such as brought about by Type A drama exercises which enable students to understand a concept more clearly. Often this happens during the planning of the exercise and the acting out that follows is simply a demonstration of the idea, rather than a 'living through'. It is only at the fourth stage when the work is at an experiential, feeling level that change in understanding can take place with the student being involved in some form of modification of her or his perceptions. For Bolton the qualities of reinforcement, clarification and modification are fused stages, with a natural ebb and flow in most drama work, including regression to artificial drama.

This model provides a useful framework for looking at what is happening in a drama lesson. The area of most interest to me is that which Bolton describes as Type D 'drama for understanding'. However, not only is it the most difficult to achieve but it is clearly also the most difficult to assess, being concerned with 'internal action' and shifts in the participants' thoughts and feelings. Drama teachers aiming to work in this mode often rely heavily on personal intuition to assess the success of a piece of drama. They might, for instance, only be able to report on a particular moment of tension at a critical, challenging point and the quality of attention which seemed to be emanating from the students. In terms of gathering the students' own commentaries, unlike in literature where the words evoking response at least remain on the page for review, in drama the stimulus is temporary and evanescent. While keeping a drama journal or diary is a valuable exercise for students to encourage reflection, it is difficult to record accurately finer and more detailed

responses to an experience which is already receding into the past. Occasionally in the project some students did refer to drama sessions in their reading journals, although these comments tended to be of a general nature. However for the purposes of the research, even if the students had kept detailed drama diaries of their responses, these would only really have been useful in conjunction with close description and analysis of the drama activities in which they had been involved.

My own subjective observations of the external action suggested that while Types A, B and C were all evident, I would be reticent about making claims about Type D. The teacher's preferred modes appeared to be Type A exercise drama - aiming for clarification of a particular idea or principle - combined with a Type C performance or theatre orientation.¹ He tended not to engage in the drama himself, except in a few instances taking on an authority figure role, for example with the specific intention of provoking a counter response. Opportunities for Type B dramatic playing and 'living-through' experiences tended to be, as described by Bolton, rather superficial. Indeed the teacher at times expressed concern about the students being "mechanistic". However these educational question marks were not reflected in the students' final evaluation comments. Drama appeared to have remained popular with most students throughout the year, a third of them singling out their enjoyment of 'acting out' scenes.

An example of drama informing student perceptions of issues

Whatever the queries in terms of educational drama, it was nevertheless apparent from occasional comments that some students did make links between issues being raised in drama and those in the literature. I have little evidence of what

¹ Alan saw himself as prioritising 'performance' over 'process' which he associated with the approach of Elly Williams who worked a lot in role as a means of 'creating belief' and 'deepening the drama'.

actual learning was involved through making those links, except in an interesting dialogue between Angela and Tanya in the taped response they made at home to the sheet entitled 'The Holocaust' (Appendix 6.6). Part of this discussion has already been quoted in relation to Friedrich (Chapter 7: 186). It illustrated Angela moving from the principle of "you should stick up for other people" to wondering what she would have done "if it was back then" and her friend Tanya had been Jewish. In discussion, Tanya made the connection to a previous drama role play involving responses in a school setting to a religious sect called the Jezreels, nicknamed 'Scavvies'. In the exercise Angela had been assigned the role of a 'middle-roader' (as opposed to being part of either the 'intolerant' or 'tolerant' group) but, interestingly, had moved from the neutral role into joining in the taunting of the 'Scavvies'. Questioned afterwards (by the teacher) during a hotseating session she had explained her behaviour in terms of self-protection. By taking part in the persecution she had stopped the bullies from picking on her. My impression was that Angela was somewhat embarrassed by this admission, even though she had supposedly been 'in role'. It seems quite possible that she had learnt something about herself and potential human behaviour from that role play exercise and subsequent hotseating. Perhaps this learning also contributed to her subsequently imagining herself "back then" at the time of Friedrich, and to her questioning whether she would have had the strength to remain true to her principles of loyalty and equality, had her friend Tanya been Jewish.

The same taped discussion had another example of Angela and Tanya attempting to make sense of Cardinal Hume's statement that "it is our responsibility to resist the first signs of injustice and violence". They began by thinking of hypothetical examples in a local context which Tanya suddenly connected to another drama lesson:

TANYA: What like um.. if you are a black.. a little black person in a cla.. in maybe a classroom um.. and and this other little kid goes.. goes 'oh look at that nigger!'

and that.. and you you.. and you don't stick up for them, you are just as bad a person as the person who is saying that.

ANGELA: Yeah you should feel just as guilty (TANYA: yeah).. it's like taking um.. all the Palestinians all the Hindus all the Chinese or (TANYA: mmm) or just because of the colour or the religion or something and stationing them all in a ghetto like in Christchurch or something (TANYA: yeah yeah) and putting a ten-foot fence all the way around the town so nobody can get in.

TANYA: Oh that's like the um (ANGELA: concentration camp).. Yeah remember that drama lesson we did on that?

ANGELA: Oh yeah..

TANYA: With that um..

ANGELA: Richard Finch came in..

TANYA: That's it that's it and we all did that thing where we went into these groups and he told.. you told the uh... all your group what was the sort of incident and we did a still picture.

ANGELA: Yeah I thought that was.. I didn't like the way he was putting us in groups. I felt really like.. well I didn't feel.. I felt like a part of a class before we were put in our groups (TANYA: mmm) but after you were put in your group you felt like a part of that group (TANYA: yeah) like you were stuck to them and separated from your best friends just cause like your best friend didn't have earrings in and you did.. you were better than them. (TANYA: yeah yeah) What was your story like.. the one you told?

The lesson to which the girls were referring was Richard Finch's session on the themes of difference and being an outsider (related to Friedrich). Having begun with everyone in a large circle, including himself, sharing a piece of personal information about themselves, Richard had then begun grouping the students according to different criteria (e.g. whether they had a watch on their left hand, wore an earring, etc.) After briefly writing down what they thought made them different from anyone else, the students were put into groups and asked first to think quietly, and then tell each other, about a time when they had been made to feel an outsider. Each group had then chosen one situation out of which to create a still picture depicting exclusion.

What seemed significant in Angela and Tanya's discussion is the way in which they connected the affective personal experience within drama to their cognitive understanding of wider social issues. While Angela was far more articulate and

dominant than Tanya, in the privacy of this conversation between friends, Tanya (who only spoke out in class if specifically called upon by the teacher) was not only an active listener, but actually made the links with their previous drama lessons, perceiving their relevance.

Hotseating

As stated earlier, a major reason for looking particularly at the experience of hotseating is that it was used, for the most part, in close conjunction with the texts, thus providing points of reference for the students' perceptions. It was also a feature of the course which in the students' final evaluations received unanimous approval. In itself hotseating is just one technique, useful in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. For instance, it can be used within a drama session to deepen the level of understanding within dramatic playing, by breaking off to interview one of the players in role with the intention of taking the drama deeper and further. It can equally also be used within a classroom setting during the reading of a novel, by stopping to interview some of the characters in role, in order to gain clarification about the inter-relationships. Hotseating appears to me to have the defined structure and rules of procedure common to drama exercise, combined with a variable element of theatre, depending on the kind of focus given to the person being hotseated and the concomitant sense of event. The element of dramatic playing may, however, be problematic in that there is immediate imbalance with only the interviewee in role. Nevertheless, although it is possible for both parties to remain involved at only an intellectual level in the exercise, it is also possible that the person being hotseated - perhaps through a heightening of the element of theatre - moves deeper into the role and the feelings of 'as if'. This in turn might deepen the other participants sense of actually getting to 'know' the character being role-played, affectively as well as cognitively.

It was with this possibility in mind, and with the specific purpose of using hotseating as a means of challenging students' perceptions, that the black writer Millie Murray was invited to work with the students in relation to the novels Buddy and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Her brief was to be interviewed in role as various black characters in the novels and through her responses to challenge any possible misconceptions. Indeed it was hoped that she might be able to disturb some of the mental and emotional underpinning for complacency about racism. Millie Murray's perspective very much reflected that of Mildred Taylor who herself acknowledged concern with reframing perceptions. A section of this speech by the author of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry has already been quoted (Chapter 8: 192), with the author speaking of her desire to show "a different kind of Black world" and a black family surviving the onslaught of a discriminatory society with strength and dignity (English Centre, 1984). The historical representation of slaves as docile and childlike, to which Mildred Taylor had been subjected in school as a child, contradicted sharply with the knowledge she had gained at home. It was her hope that her characters the Logans would "provide the heroes missing from the schoolbooks of my childhood" (English Centre, 1984).

Students' perceptions and renderings of black characters from Buddy

Aspirations such as these were central to the idea of Millie Murray being invited to work with the students. The idea germinated after I had observed a hotseating session amongst the students themselves relating to characters in Buddy. Hotseated as the white working-class Buddy, Ian's racist perceptions revealed themselves in the way he justified Buddy's friendship with the black Rybeero twins:

PAUL: Once you said some nasty things about black kids so what why are you changed now?

IAN: Because they sort of show me that they're not really black. They're sort of the same as me.

I had to ask myself whether any other students also perhaps held assimilationist, 'whitened' images of the twins? Further evidence of an essentially negative, albeit unwitting, perception relating to black people came from an unexpected source, namely Angela, one of the lowest scorers on the Racist Perceptions Survey. Hotseated as Charmian, Angela role-played her as passively putting up with racism, rather than reacting with any anger:

DONALD: What do you think about all the other kids in your class, how they treat you?

ANGELA: Oh I just shrug it off. You get used to it after a while. I mean quite a lot of kids are racist I suppose. I mean I've got my brother.. my twin to stick with so I don't really mind....

TERRY: If Buddy asked you out what would you say?

ANGELA: I'd probably say yes, but he'd probably get a lot of stick from all the other white kids so if it was for his sake I'd say no.

Asked about her parents, she spoke of them being supportive and "jolly", cheering her up when necessary, but admitted to feeling shame at times:

A.P: Are you sometimes embarrassed by them (your parents) in the way Buddy is sometimes embarrassed by his father?

ANGELA: I don't think in the same way. I mean I don't mind their taste in things. Sometimes I get ashamed of my colour and their colour.

A.P: Why?

ANGELA: Because although people say that my mother is really jolly and she reflects on people and makes them happy and things, sometimes when we are walking together people give her funny looks and things.

Given that Angela was the most outspoken, self-confident girl in the class, articulating strong views on equality, it seemed of note that she had not imagined that Charmian would reject insults more forcefully. Angela's interpretation of Charmian also seemed in marked contrast to her stated pride in her own Irish origins. Despite her Southern British Standard English accent, she had declared boldly in the first survey: "I think about how lucky I am to be Irish and I am never ashamed." Nor was her interpretation grounded in the text. Charmian is not present when the racist joking takes place and we do not hear any commentary from her on it. Whenever we see her, she is

confident, caring and perceptive. The ways that Angela filled the gaps in the text (Iser, 1978) and the sort of predictions she made, suggested the possibility of significant cultural stereotyping which needed to be challenged.

Further drama work focused on status and power, the students being directly asked to fill a gap in the text by improvising the scene on Parents' Evening between the racist teacher Mr Normington and the Rybeeros. Angela, playing Mrs Rybeero, hotly defended her son but did not raise the issue of racism. However, in the following week's improvisation, the astute Philip, playing Mr Rybeero, openly confronted Mr Normington, played by the teacher Alan Parsons:

PHILIP: Can you explain why you complain when Charmian is being quiet and you complain when her brother is the opposite? Would you prefer them both to be dumb?

A.P: No Mr Rybeero. What I am asking is for Julian to think before he speaks and Carmian (sic) to speak at all. I would appreciate it if you would say something to them about this. (A.P. deliberately mispronouncing the twins' names)

PHILIP: I just think Charmian is intimidated by whites. If you go into any High Street white people will take the micky out of her.

The meeting ended however with Mr Normington slickly defusing the conflict, with general agreement from the students that this role play seemed realistic. Sympathy clearly rested with the Rybeeros who had been out-manipulated, but they nevertheless remained framed in terms of 'intimidated victims'.

Other signs that common stereotypes and fears amongst some members of the class could be tapped without much difficulty also emerged in the class discussion about Buddy's experience at the Satellite Youth Club, most of whose members were black, and with the black boy Dennis in particular (Chapter 6: 159-165). These included Ian's view of Dennis as "sort of a typical black because they sort of judge you", Graham's description of the Youth Club as a "very very strange environment" and John's statement about being "frightened" and

feeling "out of place and all these black people looking at you and people staring".

Millie Murray as Charmian and Mrs Rybeero

Once Millie Murray had agreed to be hotseated - first as Charmian, speaking Standard English, and then as her mother, Mrs Rybeero, speaking Jamaican English - the students were asked if they would like to meet the two of them, ten years on from the book. Initial scepticism about a 'real' Charmian soon turned to enthusiasm. The class wrote their expectations of what Charmian might now be like and potential questions for the visitors. Millie was sent these, with a copy of the students' own hotseating session, giving her an idea of the implicit stereotypes she would be attempting to counter.

Initially almost all the students were taken in by Millie's Charmian, presented as a resourceful, articulate writer who - reflecting Millie's own career - had been a psychiatric nurse and a secretary. Suspicions were only aroused when she re-appeared as a motherly, outspoken Mrs Rybeero, whose sharp tongue reduced Mr Normington to "that wicked, evil man!" This part of the session was peppered with laughter, largely at Millie's versatile parrying of questions aimed at detecting her true identity. Through both characters, however, Millie introduced a range of challenging attitudes.

Asked about the racist jokes in the "Express" class, Millie's Charmian combined perceptive sympathy for Buddy's desire not to be an outcast, with contempt for the initiators of the racism who

"didn't openly come out.. and that gave me strength. I felt good about that.. because that's what bullies are like you know people who are racist who have these racist attitudes.. making snide remarks.. they could never come up and say 'you jungle-bunny'.. as you walk by you catch it but you're walking by..."

Reflecting on Mr Normington's "man-made air of self-importance", she made it clear that although Charmian had not

been able to confront him as a child, this did not imply getting 'used to' the abuse:

"..the snide remarks he used to make about my colour I um found very offensive.. but you know.. it's not something.. really that.. you can um dwell on too much.. because I think it could make you quite violent actually.. you know if someone never liked you because of your colour or... you spoke differently or... you come from a place that's different from them or your eyes are blue or your religion is different... so now on reflection when I think of Mr Normington.. I do feel angry at times when I think of all the times when I really could have stood up to him but.. I pity him.. because he obviously has a problem.... to be that way to young people. I wonder if he would be that way perhaps.. to a black man.. you know on an equal level to him.. perhaps not."

In Millie's characterisation of Charmian it can be seen that Mr Normington's abuse of power had not ultimately won the day - either by provoking her to "dwell on" it too much in sheer anger, or by her accepting the demeaning message. Indeed the provocation seemed to have encouraged Millie's Charmian to become more resilient. She was able to see Mr Normington in terms of a wider human canvas. By relating his racism to other kinds of discrimination and particularly to his domination of young people, Millie opened out a number of links for her audience to consider.

Responding to questions on a range of issues, Millie's Charmian and Mrs Rybeero were not one-dimensional 'victims', but individuals contending with - and resisting - racism as part of full, active lives. The nature of the session in which the students hotseated Millie differed in a fundamental respect from the previous session in which they had interviewed other members of the class in role. Even when it was clear that Millie was not actually Charmian but was playing a role - in other words that she was in the 'as if' mode - she was obviously bringing to the role her own experience as a black woman, thus increasing the dimension of reality.

Coming out of role, Millie initiated small group drama work. Given a fictional entry in Charmian's diary about Mr Normington endorsing yet more racist baiting, the students were asked to improvise a subsequent scene with Charmian and friends. It was a task they found difficult, Millie intervening at one point to ask them how they would feel if the discrimination was against Catholics. In a short debriefing, the teacher commented that they conveyed a sense of powerlessness in dealing with the harassment.

The session concluded with a version of Forum Theatre with Millie as Charmian, aged twenty-four, unexpectedly meeting Mr Normington, played by Philip. Other students, sitting in a circle around the two main protagonists, volunteered to be various characters from the book. As the confrontation developed, Charmian and Mr Normington each called on people to speak in their defence. Philip (who as Mr Rybeero had made an able attempt to stand up to Alan Parsons' Mr Normington) quickly found himself overpowered by Charmian's direct accusations with her open, dogged insistence that he had allowed racism to go unchallenged in his classroom. The discussion became increasingly heated, with Donald suddenly accusing Charmian of fabricating evidence because she had a "chip on her shoulder". Her reply was straight-forward:

"My memory is very good and I haven't got a problem. You see the reason you told me I've got a problem you see is because you're not black."

Unfortunately further developments were cut short by the bell.

Discussions the following day in groups and with the whole class were revealing. Assumptions about black women held by Ian and John, the two highest scorers on the Racist Perceptions Scale - concerning fertility and achievement - had certainly been challenged although there was no indication they would be altered. Indeed two-thirds of the class had predicted Charmian would be married and almost half that she would have children:

TANYA: I thought Charmian would be.. would have a family by now.

IAN: I think it's really um.. that you think of her from a Jamaican I think.. you see um.. quite a lot of black children around so I thought she would have started a family up already."

Tanya's response can probably be interpreted in the light of a Catholic focus on women as mothers, or her own love of children (wanting to work with them), although in an interview she didn't see herself starting a family, saying "It's too much responsibility".

Ian, however, openly admitted to having thought of Charmian "from a Jamaican" [point of view]. Later, apparently egged on by Ian, John acknowledged his surprise at Millie being a writer. The giggles and intonation of the exchange suggest an awareness amongst the group of the racist connotations:

IAN: I think John wants to say something now!

JOHN: (brief giggle) I was surprised when um the school got an author.. I thought they would have just got a black woman off the streets.. you know someone they knew or something. (controlling giggle)

ANGELA: Oh no! (laughter)

IAN: That's not very nice! (loud, possibly to convey affected shock)

JOHN: No! Not off the streets! But someone the school knew (giggle) or somebody like that! (controls laugh)

NEIL: No I don't think so John.. I mean-

JOHN: I was surprised when they got an author though.

NEIL: It's supposed to be pretty organised! They wouldn't just sort of go out and say "Would you like to come and do that?"

In contrast, Marco who had scored at the lowest end of the first survey, affirmed in another group how much he had enjoyed supporting Charmian in her exchange with Mr Normington. While refraining from speaking of his own experiences since arriving in England from Italy three years previously, Marco commented: "I suppose you get the same kind of situation if somebody was Irish." However, some months later and in private, he spoke of his personal shock at having been 'put down' as an Italian by a particular teacher.

A number of students acknowledged that the experience with Millie had brought new realisations to them about the hurt

caused by racist name-calling, although Philip's tone possibly suggested a slightly ambivalent response to what he perceived as 'a moral message':

PHILIP: I thought it was good cause um.. we didn't really understand how blacks feel when they are called racist things.. and we had to try and understand.. (slowing down speech for last phrase - affected?)

DAN: I think we understood how black people cope.. when they.. when um people make racist remarks at them.. and I think we just.. we just think we know what they do.. when they get back.. but.. they really feel.. hurt.

MARION: But we will never know how they really feel because we are not black ourselves so we will never get the racist remarks that they get.. so.. we won't know exactly.

CAROLINE: Yeah but we had a good practice when we were doing the um.. the acting out.. it was pretty good.. we learnt a lot.

Marion's remark was the most perceptive, suggesting a deep affective level of knowledge derived from experience and not fully penetrable by cognitive understanding alone. Sentiments similar to those of the two boys, suggesting they had not previously understood the degree of hurt, were also expressed by others:

SIMON: I still think that er.. I didn't realise how much the um black people felt offended by it....

However Simon was unable to share Michelle's acknowledgement that she now had a better understanding of Dennis' hostile response to Buddy:

MICHELLE:now I realise that he'd been having.. you know he's been having all this trouble from you know the white kids at school.... and so now I realise.... why he was so off to um Buddy.

SIMON: I understand how Dennis feels but I don't know why he took it out on Buddy....

ANDREW: But at least there's not.. not very much racialism in this school. ("I'm saying the right thing" tone?)

It is difficult to pin-point undercurrents of tone, but nonetheless I thought it worth recording where the way a statement was said suggested it might have been made simply for public consumption. Andrew, having lived in South Africa for a number of years, was therefore likely to be more aware than most of the challenge Millie presented to racist ideas.

Certainly there was the potential for him to feel more uncomfortable than most. Apart from a couple of occasions in small group discussion where he had ended up more or less defending apartheid and his family's right to have a black servant at the bottom of their garden (Chapter 9: 229-31), I had the feeling he generally kept such challenges at bay by consciously saying the 'right' thing. In the class discussion that followed group talk on Millie's session, Alan Parsons homed in on Andrew:

A.P: Did it do anything to your um attitudes?

ANDREW: Yes.

A.P: What?

ANDREW: Um.. what do you mean by um you know...

A.P: Have you ever been in a position where you've had um a black person speaking to you in that way before?

ANDREW: N-n-

A.P: ...addressing you in that way before?

ANDREW: N-no. Not as I can recall, no.

A.P: Did it surprise you? (Andrew nods) What?

ANDREW: Um how straight-forward she was and you know started to talk just talked about it like um normally like a normal person.

Here Andrew unwittingly revealed that black people for him usually came into a category other than normal. It is impossible to know what lasting effect Millie Murray's visit might have had on his frames of reference. He may possibly have moved to a position of conceding some black people to be "normal", while still maintaining that the "garden-boy" in South Africa was happy working for his family and living at the bottom of their garden.

A number of students made the point that Millie had expected a lot of them. While there is no evidence that they would have commented differently had Millie been white, I hoped this had challenged black 'deficit' imagery. Many students asked whether Millie might return and generally there was considerable appreciation of the experience she had created, as expressed here by Gaby and Julia:

GABY: I thought it was good of her to talk about her race and everything 'cause it sort of broke the barrier down.

Journal entry by Julia:

"The work we had to do was good fun and it realised to me how much whites are racist before then I never bothered. Charmian answered all questions well and I thought she had a good ambition."

'Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry' and the power divide

The opportunity for Millie to return arose a few months later, with Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Once again, discussion and hotseating amongst the students themselves revealed some significant misconceptions. In particular I was concerned that the Logan children were being regarded as harsh for not accepting the white boy Jeremy's offers of friendship. A common view seemed to be "If he is loyal to them, why aren't they loyal to him?" Making judgements from within the confines of their own experience, they seemed to have little idea of the enormous power divide between white and black in America of the 1930s.

In preparation for Millie's second session - and to give her an idea of their perceptions - the students were asked to draft film scripts entitled 'The Burning' (Appendix 7.3). Their brief was to develop a dialogue between Cassie and Jeremy after Cassie suspects his family of involvement in burning a neighbour's house. Only a few of these scripts, however, depicted the confrontation with real tension, although many of the scripts reveal Jeremy taking a 'just let's be friends' line.

Millie Murray as Cassie, Mama and Big Ma: the challenge of a black perspective

For this session it was clear to the students from the start that Millie would be role-playing. Beginning as Cassie, then with her hair up as Mama, Cassie's mother, and finally putting on a headscarf and becoming Big Ma, the grandmother, Millie took the students through the three generations of Logan women. Apart from changing her hairstyle, Millie reflected the changes in personae in intonation and manner of speaking, as well as in the perspective she conveyed for each character.

Whereas less than a quarter of the questions directed to Millie on the previous occasion as Charmian and Mrs Rybeero were connected to issues of racism, nearly 85 per cent of Millie's answers as Cassie, Mama and Big Ma related to racism and, in particular, the psychological responses derived from living under racist oppression. For instance, replying to a question from Philip about why she had been "so nice" to Jeremy's sister Lillian Jean after the latter had humiliated her, Millie gave an explanation beyond the mere fact that Cassie was planning to get her own back:

MILLIE: I was just you know thinking that if I just play up to her.. you know like a sweet little nigger girl.. she wouldn't really know what was in my mind.. and she never! That's how stupid people are! You know when people think they have power over you.. they just think that you are stupid... just because they're poor and sometimes cause we're black.. we're not stupid you know... Let me ask you all a question.. what would you do in my situation? How would you feel in my situation? (pause) Well you ain't got no tongue.. you can't talk? Cause you can't imagine what it's like to be in my situation.. cause when you're born black you stay black till you die.. and you know being black is not a problem. It's just a problem to white people.. to some white people..."

Many of the students' questions about how Cassie felt about certain characters provided Millie with an opportunity to open out deeper social as well as psychological dynamics. For instance when she was asked "Do you really hate Mr Simms?" (Jeremy's father), she attempted to clarify that her angry feelings - indeed hatred - should be distinguished from 'race' hate:

GIRL (unidentified voice): Do you really hate Mr. Simms?
MILLIE: Well.. I guess I do.. I mean I don't just hate him cause he's a white man and he's Lillian Jean's papa.. I hate him because he's not a nice man.. you know well he probably just hate me cause I'm black.

A number of questions were put to Millie, both as Cassie and Mama, concerning their feelings about Jeremy. As Cassie, Millie attempted to explain that although she could recognise

Jeremy's positive qualities, the situation in which they lived could not be ignored.

MARION: What did you think of the present Jeremy gave to Stacey.. the flute?

MILLIE: Well I don't know.. it was a nice gesture I suppose you know. I mean Jeremy does try but.. well it's kinda like a difficult situation cause unless you live in that kind of oppression.. you may not understand what.. what's happening down there you know.

A little later Philip asked how she would feel if Jeremy died, presumably trying to test her feelings about Jeremy further, and Tanya wanted to know how she compared Jeremy with TJ, who although black was untrustworthy. After an intervening question on how she compared the situation of Jewish people with that of black people, Millie was once again brought back to Jeremy and the uneasy question of trusting white people:

MICHELLE: How would you feel if Jeremy turned against you and then didn't want to go around with you?

MILLIE: Well to tell the truth it wouldn't surprise me none.. you know because where I come from you just don't trust white folk.. you just don't trust them at all.. no matter how friendly and how loving and how nice they can be to y'all...

While Millie, both as Mama and Big Ma, came across as more restrained and calm in her responses, the underlying message about it not being safe to trust white people nevertheless remained the same.

Following the hotseating, Millie created a short improvisation with herself as Cassie and Peter volunteering to play Jeremy. Using the same starting point as the film script, Millie as Cassie confronted Peter as Jeremy with news of a house being burnt in the night by white people. Peter's first response was to defend his father, saying he would not have been involved. However after persistent challenges from Millie, he changed to saying that he had not the power to stop his father. Cassie should accept that he himself felt differently and they should not let this spoil their friendship. Millie in role as Cassie, however, refused to let him off the hook, forcing him to admit that if his father insisted, he would accompany him on a

burning expedition. The scene ended with Cassie expressing disgust. How could they be friends on that basis?

While there had been some laughter from the students at a couple of points where Peter was working himself into the accent and dialect of Jeremy, it appeared that his active involvement with Millie in the role play had directly challenged and affected him. In the writing workshop that followed, Peter diverged from the task set the class by Millie. Instead he produced a piece of writing in role as Jeremy which was impressive not only for its authentic tone of voice ("My Papa sure scares me 'bout the other night") but as a statement about how he would make a stand against his father. Usually fairly reticent, Peter volunteered to read this to the class. It seemed he had become involved in more than an exercise. It is also interesting to note that Peter was one of the students whose score on the Racist Perceptions Scale decreased over the year (from 8 to 4).

Although journal entries revealed that students had enjoyed this session, there was a feeling that the Buddy event had been more fun. Certainly the majority of questions to Millie on Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry led into serious issues, in which racism had shifted centre-stage, as mentioned earlier. In addition Millie's perspective was one which challenged the notion that racism is simply a matter of personal feelings and that as long as a white person does not feel personally hostile towards black people, then she or he can be dissociated from anti-black racism in the society.

Retrospective reflection: possibilities and limitations within drama

Some students, however, also expressed that it would have been good to have been involved in more drama themselves. For instance Simon commented:

"I find that when drama is being carried out, I usually understand what is happening better."

The evidence of Peter's response following his role play with Millie would bear this out, although clearly a significant factor in that particular interchange was the weight of reality which Millie carried as Cassie. The issue of involvement raises questions in retrospect about how to have drawn more fully on what the students may have discovered through the hotseating session in ways that engaged and challenged them emotionally as well as intellectually. This is, I believe, the realm of Bolton's Type D 'drama for understanding'. It is necessary for students to have both structure and focus as well as the space to feel their own sense of control over, and responsibility for, the drama. A teacher who is able to weld and combine the elements of 'exercise', 'dramatic playing' and 'theatre' as a whole, perhaps moving in and out of role her or himself - at times to further the internal drama or to halt it for external reflection - may be in the best position to enable students to face up to difficult challenges at an emotional as well as intellectual level. What is possibly critical in this model is that the drama teacher is prepared to move in and out role and be seen to be investing in the drama in the same way as the students are expected to invest in it - and the drama only works because there is an agreement to trust each other. The drama is thus removed from the traditional realm in which the teacher sets up activities and relies on her or his authority for students to perform. There are fundamental issues here related to the kinds of pedagogical frameworks which need to be developed for undertaking work in exploring racism with students, to which I shall return in my final chapter.

While hotseating was not generally embedded within drama in this way, it nevertheless appeared to have been of value in terms of the specific purposes for which it was used in the project, namely eliciting students' perceptions and offering challenges to some of those perceptions through the hotseating of Millie Murray. Comments made by some of the students in a discussion, led by Alan Parsons immediately after Millie's

second session, indicated some of the strengths of hotseating:

"You sort of get right down deep in yourself and pull out all the answers." (John)

"It makes you ask things that you don't really understand." (Greg)

"When people who are hotseated are asked questions they seem to have answers that you never thought of." (Philip)

While, as in drama generally, it is not possible to measure how stereotypes may or may not have shifted towards perceptions of a fuller reality, these responses suggest the potential of hotseating to be personal, active and exploratory for both interviewer and interviewee. However, it is necessary also to recognise its limits and that sensitive debriefing is essential. For instance, in hotseating characters from a text, basic misunderstandings or misreadings may be revealed. Furthermore a character portrayed through hotseating is itself a construction, derived not only from the text but from the life experiences of the person in the chair. It would have been valuable, for instance, for the students to have spent time after Millie's sessions actually contrasting their previous responses with hers, in order to draw out the links between her portrayals and her own experience as a black person in a white dominated society.

Given that the interpretation or construction of black characters by white students would be limited by their own frames of reference, a major question arises about how to challenge limitations in perception when there is no recourse to someone like Millie Murray. Within drama, a teacher who was aware of these issues could try to use teacher-in-role to present a more critical black perspective. First-hand testimonies of black people could also be used to develop the drama (Dodgson, 1984). Students might also increase their understanding by exploring other situations of oppression but in more familiar contexts. The latter approach provides the rationale for John Twitchin's 'Target Group' exercise (Twitchin, 1988: 16-17) and underlies much current work on human rights education (Development Education Centre, 1988;

Pike & Selby, 1988) as well as the developing theory and practice of anti-racist education in predominantly white primary schools (Epstein and Sealey, 1990). It is also obviously important to have access to a range of related materials which might help to raise awareness. Poetry and music might be able to convey to some students the 'voice' they may have been missing and open the door for some students to experience the celebratory sense of resistance of people who have not allowed themselves to become dehumanised by racism.

Whatever the ways in which one might attempt to open up such doors, however, Millie Murray posed a final question at the end of her second workshop which indicates a continuing challenge:

"You know unless you are sort of living under oppression of any kind, can you fully understand it?"

CHAPTER TWELVE: FROM FICTION TO REALITY - RESPONSES TO DIRECT MEDIA FOCUS ON RACISM

The need to bring issues home

My original intention was for the students to return at the end of the project to literature focusing on racism in a British context. While the first novel Buddy had a local setting, racism remained essentially a side issue within it. Although I had not been able to find a novel I felt appropriate, there was a range of short stories which would not only introduce another genre, but would also offer a variety of contexts. I was keen for instance that issues of anti-Irish as well as anti-Asian racism should be raised. With almost a third of the class having some Irish connection, there was a possibility of drawing on potential empathy as well as broadening the focus.

However, as mentioned previously, study of the preceding novels took longer than I had predicted and in the end there was only time for the students to read Farrukh Dhondy's short story entitled 'K B W' (the initials being a graffiti acronym for 'Keep Britain White'). In the story a white working class boy witnesses his father fail to live up to his Communist principles by not helping their Bangladeshi neighbours during a vicious racist attack. Furthermore the boy comes to recognise his own complicity in not having confronted the more subtle racism experienced by his friend, the neighbour's son. The reading of 'K B W', however, was extremely rushed. Apart from a brief and fairly superficial class discussion immediately after reading, there was insufficient time for the students to develop their own responses and understanding. Given the inadequate nature of the reading, it is not worth pursuing the students' responses to the story further. Nevertheless, since I had always felt it essential to end the project by locating the issues as close to home as possible, once I realised that we were running out of time, I decided to broaden my original remit of using responses to fiction as the

primary route in to the exploration of racism. The students' responses to the subsequent change of medium involving a direct focus on racism, and the manner in which the project began to be re-perceived by a number of students, raised important issues which had not previously surfaced.

'Getting to Grips with Racism' (BBC-TV)

In order to address the British context within a limited time, I arranged for the students to view the BBC series Getting to Grips with Racism (BBC, 1988) during Religious Education (RE) periods in the summer term, while they were still reading Waiting for the Rain. Their customary Religious Education teacher agreed to forego five periods, the sessions being led by the Senior Teacher who had attended the DES 20-day Multicultural Education course, Gerald Carey. My presence at these sessions must have indicated to the students, if they had not already deduced it, that my interest in their responses extended beyond the broad domain of literature, relating particularly to questions of racism.

The tone of the series itself is very direct, the producer Peter Evans writing in the Teacher's Guide:

"Many people are nervous about tackling this subject - of 'Getting To Grips With Racism'. When we started work on the series, we certainly were, but once we got started we decided that the programmes must not appear to be nervous. They must come straight to the point about what racism is and how it affects people. Racism will not go away if we creep up on it and circle round it. Only if the audience is left in no doubt about its nature, will they be able to go on to do something about it."

The manner of Terry Badoo, the black presenter, reflected this approach, both in voice and body language. The series consists of four programmes for students, accompanied by a Teachers' Guide and a Pupils' Booklet suggesting many activities to help deepen understanding. However shortage of time again seriously limited related activities and discussion. The first programme explains what is meant by racism, looking at kinds of racism young people may experience and raising issues of the role of schools and anti-racist policies. Programme two looks at

racism in the local community - for instance graffiti, racist attacks, relations with the police and discrimination in employment - and how black people have been trying to deal with these questions. The third programme moves on to the wider area of national and institutional racism, examining the role of the media and the effect of government policies, especially in the field of immigration. Finally programme four returns to the classroom, looking at the hidden messages in the curriculum and resources, raising questions of what is taught and what is omitted.

Ideally the series should be shown over an eight to ten week period, with sufficient time for the students to become actively involved with the issues of each unit before moving on to the next. The project students had approximately half this space, with no allocation of homework time to develop initiatives beyond the classroom. In retrospect it might have been wiser to have selected only a couple of the programmes, developing more activities around them, rather than attempting to cover all four. A further difficulty was that Gerald Carey, the Senior Teacher, was having to fit the sessions into an already over-stretched time-table. While extremely supportive and open to ideas, he had very limited time for us to prepare collaboratively how to use the programmes. The class was not one he normally taught although the students knew him in his capacity as senior teacher. While he willingly took on board the activities I suggested, sharing with the students his own first responses to the programmes - including his strong feelings against racism - it is likely that to the students these sessions appeared tacked onto their 'normal' studies because of the research project, rather than as an organic part of them. However much Gerald Carey genuinely spoke about the importance of 'getting to grips with racism', the students would have observed that if it was not for the project, they would probably not have had five such sessions with such a direct focus on the issue.

The walls of the RE room in which the Getting to Grips with Racism sessions took place were covered with posters and work largely relating to a 'Third World' exhibition from the previous year and a previous class. A number of posters concerned equality, for example one with the words BLACK + WHITE + BLACK + WHITE = EQUAL printed around a globe. One section of work featured 'The People of the Philippines' and the role of the church in peaceful revolution and another on the work of a Catholic Aid organisation in the Sudan. The project class had been doing some work on missionaries, while their RE text-book Weaving the Web (Lohan and McClure, 1988) focused questions of conflict and reconciliation within individuals, families and communities. The teacher had however concentrated on the modules relating to Christianity, omitting all those connected with Islam.

Programme One - 'It Really Gets To You'

Before viewing the first television programme, entitled 'It Really Gets To You', the students were asked to write down individually their own definitions of racism, before sharing them in a class 'brainstorm'. After the programme the students once again individually wrote further comments, including possible changes in their perceptions and definitions. Only four out of twenty-five students gave a definition of racism which made no reference to white/black relationships. Definitions ranged from references to dislike of people on the basis of colour (with some people mentioning nationality, religion, and beliefs as well) to hate and "ganging up". Most definitions moved beyond the idea of generalised dislike (i.e. prejudice) to include some form of action, from saying things about another group or name-calling, to the taking of broader, or physical, action. The definition offered in the subsequent film was that of 'prejudice + power':

"It's being prejudiced against people from different backgrounds and cultures and taking some kind of action to do them down, to injure them and to humiliate them."
(Terry Badoo, Programme Presenter)

While before the film more than two-thirds of the definitions included some notion of action, about a third also contained the idea of one group being more powerful. However this tended to be implicit rather than explicit, Marion's statement appearing to come the closest to being explicit about the operation of power.

"I think racism is when people put down other people because of their colour and where they come from. There could be conflict between the two groups (especially black and white) because of different believes. Rights would be taken away by the superior group." (Marion, before programme)

Like a few others, after viewing the film, her idea of why people were targeted broadened from being to do with colour and origin, to including notions of culture:

"I never knew that white people abuse coloured people because they were wearing clothes not from their own culture or about the food they ate but the way the coloured people are abused and the amount they are, does vary from different parts of the country." (Marion, after programme)

It is not surprising that students tended to see the primary source of the conflict, or 'putting down', residing rather simply in people's personal or group dislikes - indeed sometimes hatred - of those of another 'race', colour or culture. Examining the roots of prejudice and racism in human behaviour is a complex task involving the study, for example, of economic, political, social as well as psychological factors (Hall, 1981). In order to have developed a more complex understanding of racism and power - and the idea of prejudices as rationalisations which help to perpetuate oppression based on 'race' - the students may well have benefitted from engaging in active learning situations, such as simulations or games, very specifically devised to explore the relationship of racism, power and prejudice. As it was, the programme 'It Really Gets To You' tended to reinforce the focus on personal/group hostility and racism at a surface level, with quite a number of students acknowledging surprise at the degree of hatred and viciousness behind racist attacks.

In the class discussion following the programme, Terry who had declared in his definition that he was "totally against racism" stated that "They can think what they like. It's up to them.. the whites.. if they like blacks that's O K, if they don't that's up to them." However, on being questioned by the teacher, he admitted that he would not like to be called names or attacked himself. Broadening the discussion to include anti-Irish abuse, Gerald Carey asked the class for responses to Terry's view:

G.C.: How many people agree with what Terry is saying? You're entitled to be a racist is what Terry is saying.. if you want to be... Should we, in fact, influence people not to be racist? Or should we take Terry's view... if you want to be a racist.. if you want to call people 'Nigger', 'Paki', 'Paddy', 'Mick', then that is entirely up to you and you should be allowed to do that? ...Carl?

CARL: No you should perhaps try to put people off.. not influence-

G.C.: You would disagree with Terry?

CARL: No not really because-

G.C.: Oh you wouldn't disagree?

CARL: Well yeah it's still bad but.. it's like we were told that you've got free choice to do what you want.. in the Bible and that, so that if you're given free choice, you should do what you want to do.

G.C.: The Bible says very clearly... 'Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.' That is a command!"...

JOHN: I feel you have a right to think whatever you like but I think you should keep it to yourself.

G.C.: But isn't it good for us in fact to examine our own feelings and ask ourselves whether or not they are the right feelings we have? I can get really angry about people at times.. screwed up inside.. it's not doing me any good and maybe I ought to re-examine how or what I'm thinking. I know what you're saying but I think it's always good for us to look at what we're thinking and ask ourselves why we are thinking that. Does anyone hotly disagree with what Terry is saying.. really dispute what he's saying?

GRAHAM: Yeah because they shouldn't. Even if they do think those kind of things they shouldn't say it in public...

G.C.: ...But if I feel like calling you names, isn't there something... intrinsically wrong with me... that I want to pick on someone different from me? (Bell for end of lesson)

I have quoted this at some length in order to give an idea of the tone of the lesson. It is clear that discussion about racism in this Religious Education context had become very

direct in relation to the students' own attitudes and lives, with the teacher taking a strong moral position. His questions would have left the students in no doubt as to the kind of answers he was hoping to elicit. It is worth noting that John, Terry and Carl were three of the four students with the highest scores on re-administration of the Racist Perceptions Scale. The fourth, Ian, did not join in at all. It is also interesting that Carl revealed ambivalence, torn between being seen to agree with the teacher's moral position - and thus acknowledging disagreement with his friend Terry - and asserting his own right to free choice, wherever that might lead. As the student with a score which showed the greatest single increase between the first and second surveys (from low to medium high), Carl was particularly disturbing. Although his rise in explicit racism was very likely the result of a complex of factors - with personal factors beyond the realm of school - the anti-authority element in his response has pedagogical implications for teaching about racism.

A further point to note was that at this stage no-one voiced in the open a concern about racism being considered in the programme only as it operated against black people. In the Teachers' Guide to Getting To Grips With Racism, Peter Evans acknowledges that while the programmes are confined to a consideration of white racism, students may raise issues of other manifestations of racist behaviour which need to be addressed:

"A point that may be raised is that 'black people can be racist too'. According to the 'prejudice + power' definition of racism, black people can't be racist, only prejudiced, because they don't have enough power in British society to put any prejudice into action at the expense of others. That is certainly so at the higher levels of institutional racism. If, however, your questioner is talking about black youngsters going round the playground attacking or insulting whites, then, depending on the numbers in your school, there could be some truth in what's being said. It may be an embarrassing truth, and one we avoided in the programmes, but a truth that should be faced. Denying what pupils can see for themselves won't help them trust the rest of your message... Why this happens should be discussed."

While very likely dormant, this reaction from some pupils only began to surface directly towards the end of the Media Week and I shall consider it in my following chapter along with the implications of using an over-simplified 'prejudice + power' definition which personalises racism in relation to whiteness and excludes matters of class and gender (Chapter 13: 322). A final observation on this session, however, is that no girl contributed to the discussion following the film.

Programme Two - 'Racism in the Community'

Prior to the second programme 'Racism in the Community', students were asked to respond initially to the statement 'Graffiti writing on walls about other people is just a bit of a joke'. Although there was some outright rejection, a number of students made the point that, while the subject of the graffiti was likely to feel hurt, the writer of the graffiti might just see it as a joke. A few students wrote about graffiti's possible decorative value, while others spoke of it as an abuse of someone else's property. After paired/small group discussions nearly everyone agreed that graffiti was most damaging when aimed at people's families or physical features. Paul's group reflected an ambivalent response: "We all agree that if graffiti is aimed at you personally then it is very upsetting. If it is aimed at someone else then it isn't so bad."

During the programme the students were asked to make notes on points that particularly struck them. While not everyone made notes, half of those who did also added strong personal comments. Many of these indicated shock at racist behaviour on the part of the police:

"Police, too make racist remarks, I think this is disgusting!! Children are abused by police (black children). Police make ridiculous assumptions to blacks."
(Tanya)

"Many police officers admit to being prejudiced against blacks but they say it does not affect their job. I just cannot believe that." (Caroline)

Another feature which appeared to take some students aback was the way black M.P.s have to protect themselves and their families against physical attacks. Julia ended her page long commentary with the following:

"I'm glad there are Black M.P.'s but a lot of whites probably hate them. The children of the M.P. shouldn't be threatened and either should the M.P. You'd think white people would respect them! Black people should have equal rights."

The responses of at least a couple of students indicated that the programme had challenged their views. Michael (who scored at a medium high level on both occasions on the Racist Perceptions Scale) wrote:

"There seems to be strong racism when blacks are trying to seek employment.

The whites always get the more superior job.

I don't mind there being a black M.P. but how it appeared to me, they just wanted to do this just to show the white people that they can get high jobs. When he said 'We have waited for 400 years for this' this to me is a bit wrong because like I said they are just trying to get there own back which I suppose they have a right to do."

Michael was confused. On the one hand he felt compelled to recognise that black people have been denied their rights, yet at the same time he seemed to be threatened by the tone of the black M.P. Paul Boateng in his election victory speech ("We have waited 400 years for this!"). Rather than perceiving black Members of Parliament as finally achieving what had been denied to black people for centuries, he saw them as "just trying to get there own back". An apparently gentle and sensitive boy, Michael nevertheless had deeply embedded racist perceptions which appeared to override his acknowledgement of the injustice experienced by black people.

In contrast to Michael's attempt at least to articulate his confused perceptions and feelings, John made no direct reference to the film itself. Instead (after noting in relation to graffiti that it abused other people's property and that "I would be offended if they said anything about my

family"), he directly asserted his belief in the rights of white people:

"I think the blacks, Indians came over to England they should abide by our rules. I think that whites should get the upperhand on a job."

It is worth recalling that John's grandparents came to England as immigrants from Poland, as did Michael's.

In the class discussion following the film, John volunteered the first response, stating that the whole of the police force was being blamed instead of just a minority. Donald's response also indicated a degree of defensiveness when he acknowledged the film had shown "definite racist attitudes but maybe black employers would be against whites." Throughout the discussion that followed, which included contributions from some girls, Gerald Carey sought through his questions to elicit information and ideas which challenged racist assumptions. For instance, he asked how many major companies were actually black-owned. Finally, having asked the students whether this evidence of racism bothered or concerned them, he challenged Graham's reply "It bothers me but there's not a lot I can do about it", by citing the example of the two black Liverpool girls in the film who had got a football club to remove racist graffiti from the ground walls.

The discussion was inevitably constrained by its teacher-led format with the anti-racist propositions being put forward largely from a position of authority. Had time permitted, it would have been much better for the students to have discussed their responses in small groups prior to representing these in a class discussion. This would have given space for students who had strong responses against the racism in the film to gain confidence in articulating them so that they might have felt able to contribute to the larger class discussion.

Programme Three - 'Images of Black People':

The third programme, 'Images of Black People', focusing on the representation of black people in the media and examining the

recent history of immigration and immigration controls, was shown the following week. Within drama the students had recently experienced the first of the sessions about migration to the 'Motherland' (Appendix 10.1) and also researched something of their own family history of movement (Appendix 11.1). The television programme included cases of families who had been split apart and reunited only after managing to obtain proof of relationship through expensive blood tests. Before the programme, students were asked to provide initial answers to a short questionnaire entitled 'Comings and Goings - Facts and Myths' (Appendix 11.2). After the film students were asked to write their immediate responses to it. This was followed in the limited time available by a brief teacher-directed discussion of the information sheet in the Pupil's Booklet - aimed to dispel some of the common myths about immigration - before the students filled in a second set of responses to the questionnaire.

From the replies to the questionnaire, it would appear that the session ended with many students better informed on a number of points. For example, most students began by believing that more people had immigrated to Britain than emigrated in the last two hundred years, that black people first started living in Britain in the twentieth century, that the population of Britain is getting bigger and that immigration is making Britain overcrowded. These misapprehensions appear to have been corrected for most students by the information from the film and sheet. Statistical knowledge was not however so clearly absorbed (e.g. regarding the percentage of black people as immigrants and in the population), possibly because of the very limited time in which to take in the information. In listing countries from which people had emigrated to Britain, despite almost a third of the class being of Irish descent, only three students mentioned Ireland on the first response and only one on the second. Questioned by Gerald about ancestry, only five of the students could trace solely English grandparents, yet

awareness of European immigration also appeared to be considerably diminished in the second set of replies, overtaken perhaps by the film's focus on the black experience of immigration.

In their immediate writing after the film, more than half the students expressed strongly affective responses, such as:

"The programme made me realise how terrible racism is."
(Paul)

"I was appauled that the government split families up until they have proved that someone one is related to another..." (Neil)

"I thought how discusting it was for the two black boys to be sent away and be split up of their family." (Peter)

"...I had never really thought about racism in this way before. I knew about it and understood it but I never knew that it could be so cruel." (Caroline)

"My immidiata reaction is that the Government is wicked and evil to actually not believe that the children and parents are not relate, and it tries to split them up. This would never happen to a white family." (Marco)

"I think the government should change the immigration laws because then families could be together. The government is being racsist by not letting more black people into the country." (Louise)

"...this definatly shows how racist the government have become." (Gaby)

"I feel angry with the Govenmment treating black and coloured people the way they do..." (Julia)

Some students also expressed strong feelings about an excerpt from a television sports programme in which viewers witnessed banana skins being thrown at a black football player. The commentator here spontaneously condemned the behaviour but the point was made that racism such as this has frequently been allowed to pass without commentary. Dan's response suggests a certain ambivalence, perhaps caused by an uneasy sense that the definition of racism being presented by the film was much wider than one of overt hostility:

"I found this program quite distressing because I didn't think that sports commentators were racist, but what

really got me is that they let their remarks be heard by millions of people on the radio and that influences racism on other people. The part when they said that newspaper editors were racist, I don't think is completely true. I didn't believe at first what I was hearing about the immigration problems of the separation of families."

Dan did not add any more. Perhaps the final sentence implies some kind of grudging acknowledgement of the validity of the evidence on immigration.

While the tone of a number of responses suggested there were students who were not really affected by the programme, at least four students took up defensive positions. Michael (the student who in the previous programme appeared to find the assertiveness of black M.P.s threatening while seeming to acknowledge "their right") again revealed deeply embedded racist constructions - this time in relation to immigration - at the same time as deploring certain other individual acts of racism:

"When they were talking about programs making racial jokes this can be quite harmful to the black people, but to us and the T.V. producers it's just a bit of harmless fun.

Over the immigration laws I think that trying to prove that it's your family is a bit petty but the government has to control the amount of people coming into this country because it could become very overcrowded. With the white population growing and black population growing England can only take so much people.

I thought it was terrible when that football supporter threw a banana at the black football player."

Michael's description of British immigration law policy which results in the separation of families as "a bit petty" contrasts rather strikingly, for instance, with his strong sympathy for the central character of Buddy when he was separated from his mother. In his group he had commented about Buddy: "I mean a boy can't survive without his mother you know". Although the programme had shown two Asian boys forced to be apart from their mother for four years because of immigration laws, Michael's construct of 'overcrowding' in Britain appeared to override any sympathetic feelings he might have had for them. Interestingly, however, in the post-programme questionnaire he wrote that the population of

Britain was getting smaller and that immigration was not making Britain overcrowded, reversing both his pre-programme responses to these items. This indicates how cautiously one should interpret this kind of cognitive-response data as evidence of real learning, even apart from the questions concerning how much of, and for how long, newly memorised information is actually retained without subsequent reinforcement (Hunter, 1964; Maddox, 1988). While it is obviously important to ensure students have access to correct information and that misinformation is challenged, perceptions concerning issues of 'race' are deeply embedded within us at an affective level, affecting how such information is actually received (Klineberg, 1950; Allport, 1954). It seems likely that on completing the questionnaire for a second time, Michael supplied the correct replies, without any fundamental shifts in what he 'knew' and his own deep internal 'knowledge'.

Like Michael, both Ian and John provided the correct answers concerning population size on the second questionnaire. At the same time their written responses showed them both sharply critical of the programme which they perceived as an attack on white people:

"I think that the question about 'should blacks' was answered by people who were all for it but I'm sure there were people who were against it. So this shows that the T.V. programme is given a black advantage. So they are telling us that all the whites are wrong to write anything about blacks and the blacks are totally and utterley innocent." (Ian)

"I felt that they didn't show both sides to the story, they only said the points that would stand out. I also think they should of asked Adults instead of children as children would naturally say things the producers want to hear. Then they complain about the press being byias but the riots do happen. Asian people were just trying to blame it on other people!" (John)

Neither Ian nor John openly voiced these sentiments in the brief time available for verbal responses. Most of the comments reflected strong reactions against the racism evident in the film. Only Carl attempted to modify this consensus by

saying that banning the football spectator who had thrown banana peels at a black player was too harsh as it would probably produce a more negative reaction amongst his friends and it was "probably just a bit of fun".

Programme Four - 'In The Classroom':

Getting To Grips With Racism's fourth programme, 'In The Classroom', examines how the curriculum and texts used in school either encourage or help counter racism. Teaching about the history of slavery in the Caribbean is taken as a particular example, with the programme focusing on a group of white students involved in work which included Edward Brathwaite's poem 'Limbo', a poem to which the project students had also been introduced. Prior to viewing the programme the students were asked to look at questions in The Pupils' Booklet designed to raise awareness of hidden messages in books. After a brief review of these, led by the teacher, the students watched the programme, being asked to make notes of any striking points. A few students expressed surprise at the extent of British involvement in the slave trade and some, as in previous note-making exercises, included personal comments. Paul, for instance, wrote:

"It must be terrible in being separated from your family because you may never see your family again. I think more schools should be involved in fighting racism. It's sickening knowing that it was all done for money. I can't believe that scientists drew diagrams to show that the blacks were inferior and always would be. I'm glad other schools have done the poem 'Limbo' which we have done."

The programme was followed by a short exchange of notes in pairs and a class discussion. As had occurred in the first session, the discussion was almost entirely male. Apart from Carl and Ian, all the speakers tended to reinforce points made by the programme. Carl, however, argued that white people were also sometimes shown as stupid in books, to which the teacher replied that white people were, however, also represented in positive ways. Ian, speaking for the first time in these discussions on the programmes, brought up the question of

golliwogs in books and his belief that as a young child he had "read it without thinking" i.e. without being influenced. In his written notes he was more openly negative and explicit about his resentment of the programme's perspective:

"But only adults will pick out points like the whites are treating blacks badly. Young children just read the book and look at the pictures they don't take in much about the racism. The programme is always saying that whites are always wrong towards blacks. Enid Blyton wrote gollywog meaning no harm she wrote them for a young age group a long time ago. I have a golly handed down from my mother who got it because she like the storys. If nobody made a fuss about a black toy then the book would still be read without any meaning towards blacks. Black people are just trying to make themselves a place in society. They have started off all the racism by making protests about non intensionally written books towards blacks. They are making other people write books to just annoy them."

Ian's position here is the familiar one of projecting the source of the problem onto the victims, who are seen as the perpetrators by provoking racism through their protests. However, unlike Carl who seemed quite at ease with being seen to exercise his "free choice" in openly taking positions counter to those endorsed by authority, Ian tended to cover his tracks. After the teacher responded to his statement that the programme did not go into "the whites' point of view", Ian then added that he had been interested in what was said on the programme about Mohammed and would like to hear more about him. While Carl appeared to be testing out racist arguments, almost as if he wished to see their effect and the responses they would elicit, Ian's racist feelings seemed to be deeply rooted in ways that fundamentally distorted his perceptions.¹ Ian came across as much less confident than Carl, perhaps

¹ This apparent difference should not be taken to imply that Carl's intellectual interest in racism had no psychological base. While in contrast to Ian's high score on the first Racist Perceptions survey, he had scored very low, nevertheless in completing the sentence 'My experience of people of another colour from my own is...' it is worth recalling that he had written: "My only bad experience is arabs. I cannot stand them because they eat like pigs, smell like pigs and are when women are concerned, PIGS. They try to chat up my sister several times and they always stare."

feeling the need not to become too exposed in voicing overtly racist views in front of school authority figures. I had seen him, however, on other occasions to be adept at undercover joking.²

This session was again characterised by the teacher's strong lead in attempting to deconstruct racist arguments. He also made a particular point of questioning representations of Christ in books and around the school as being white. A few small incidents surrounding this fourth session might provide a glimpse into some aspects of the wider context which, however, were also likely to have impinged on the students' perceptions. While preparing the video equipment in the classroom, I was asked by the head of the Religious Education department whether the students were not getting tired of "all this" about racism. "Shouldn't they be just enjoying books for fun?" This was followed at the beginning of the lesson by the customary RE teacher taking four students out of the class (before the arrival of Gerald Carey and without any consultation) to practice an assembly which he had just agreed to do. While I am unaware of whether the head of RE would have communicated her views to the students, it was open for all the students to see that for their RE teacher a session on racism was optional rather than a priority. It was also during this fourth session that students began to ask me about my name. Was I really Beverley Naidoo and not Ms Trewhela and had I written Journey to Jo'burg? It appeared that their RE teacher had, without informing me, revealed my dual identity. As a result Gerald Carey and I decided that the format of the final session should be changed to allow the students an opportunity to ask me questions about myself.

² On one occasion when Ian and his group had forgotten about the presence of a nearby tape-recorder in a drama session, he was recorded subverting the set task through racist word-play and joking. He managed to divert both Paul and Angela, with Angela even offering "Irish are backwards say they" as a contribution, despite her stated pride in being Irish and "never being ashamed".

The final session

The final session began with Gerald Carey complimenting the students on "having been at the sharp end" of the project but having "risen to expectations". He said he was most pleased in how they were questioning things, not just necessarily "accepting what the teacher said". He also spoke about how he himself had been learning from watching the programmes. In introducing me, he made unequivocally strong statements about apartheid, as well as referring to anti-Catholic prejudice in Northern Ireland. After speaking briefly about growing up as a white child in South Africa, accepting racist views and attitudes until I was at least eighteen, I asked for questions. These came largely from Carl and Graham, focusing mainly on South Africa itself rather than asking about my own process of change. Bringing the issues back to Britain and why writing was important to me, I asked about the effect of books on young children, in their generation and their parents. As there was little response to this the teacher asked the students each to write in their journals one thing of value gained from the project, followed by any criticisms. Positive comments far outweighed negative responses and these will be reported in some detail later on (see Chapter 14: 341-47).

In the brief class discussion held after these individual evaluations, some students spoke about learning to understand more about various groups (for instance 'Jews', 'blacks', 'whites') and about racism. John volunteered that he had learnt that there were "two sides to every coin" and felt he had learnt to look at both sides: "I used to look at just my side." While it is possible that he was offering this comment as the 'right kind of thing to say', it may also have genuinely reflected one of his perceptions of the course. He did not, however, claim to have actually changed any of his views and indeed his high score on the Racist Perceptions Scale remained constant. An optimistic interpretation of his statement would be that since he was at least willing to acknowledge the possibility of 'another side', there was room

for change. A pessimistic interpretation would be that he may have simply learnt how to become a better informed racist.

Both Donald and Carl raised critical points to which I shall return later (Chapter 13: 327-30). Donald commented that they had "only studied racism" and Carl asked the question "Have we done less English than we would have done normally?" In addition he wanted to know if they should not have been doing "more grammar". The teacher assured Carl that they had been following a full English curriculum and that they had been involved in using and improving their language all the time. Both Donald and Carl's points however quite probably reflected deeper tensions related to the increasingly ambivalent attitude to the project felt by their English teacher, which were finally to be expressed openly during the Media Week. In sharp contrast to the students who spoke about gaining new understanding, Angela (with one of the lowest scores on re-administration of the Racist Perceptions Scale) commented that she "thought it was very boring" and that there were "lots of other important issues going on in the world, not just racism". Stating that she was aware of racism before the project she added "There are such things as newspapers... and everyone knows what's going on in South Africa!" Interestingly, Angela was challenged by Donald interjecting "I don't know how Angela can know everything behind the scenes!" The session ended with Gerald Carey pointing to current events in China with the students' attempted revolution, the problems of media coverage and the need for open minds. I was not sure, however, whether Angela's comments may have actually been expressing a sense of resentment at being the subject of research related to racism, possibly exacerbated by not knowing my full identity and my particular concerns from the beginning - thus raising questions of students feeling in control of their own learning.

Final evaluation comments

In the students' final evaluation session, conducted three weeks later by an outside evaluator immediately after the Media Week, there were more negative than positive responses to Getting To Grips With Racism. This apparent negative bias in overall responses may very well have been affected by the absence of half of the girls from this session. This evaluation was carried out by Chris Gaine, Senior Lecturer in Education and Racial Equality at West Sussex Institute of Higher Education, and will be reported on more fully in Chapter Fourteen. I wish to include here, however, the students' responses specifically to the television series.

A few students simply commented that the programmes had been boring or always on 'the same subject' and I was surprised by some of the students making negative comments, such as Alison, Peter and Paul. It is possible that these responses were in part a reaction against the over-simplistic 'prejudice + power' formulation of white racism inherent in the programmes - the focus of which was in fact largely continued during Media Week. However they may well also have been a reflection not so much on the programmes themselves but on the condensed way in which they had been presented with little time for small group discussions or use of active learning strategies. Some of these later evaluations did not reflect the quality of personal involvement that seemed to be present in some of the commentaries written about the films at the time. Paul's comment of 'boring' certainly did not match up with his response (quoted above) to the fourth programme and his direct statement there that "I think more schools should be involved in fighting racism." In evaluation Dan wrote that the series "was a bit informative, but only went over stuff we already knew". Given his response to programme three and the question of sports commentators and racism (also quoted above), in which he spoke of finding the evidence "quite distressing", it seems likely that the intervening time may partially have dulled some of the initial impact. Donald's comment that the

series was "allright but it was only about black racism not about the Jews ETC" linked closely to a common response to the Media Week. For Ian, the series "was also a little one sided but it was quite good because of the age of the actors came down to us and told us things we didn't know." While a number of students did not mention the programmes at all, five however made solely positive comments, including Louise and Neil:

"I thought that the TV programmes were informative and fast moving and were interesting. It gave us facts that other programmes, newspapers wouldn't." (Louise)

"They were very informative and gave ways to combat racism." (Neil)

The students' responses to Getting to Grips with Racism, both throughout the series and in later evaluation, raised a number of issues which had not arisen before in relation to the literature. Whether or not these issues would have arisen had the course ended as originally planned, exploring racism in a local British context through literature, is a matter for speculation. Television works as a different medium and the programmes were not only concerned with communicating information which related to life in Britain today, but the students clearly constituted a 'target audience'. The programmes, through the presenter, also carried a clear moral message about the unacceptability of racism. The students' perceptions of my own agenda, which had previously been far more loosely defined in connection with their responses to literature, albeit literature of a particular character, probably became more closely defined - and all the more so after the revelation of my dual identity. Statements made by both Angela and Donald in their final RE session suggested that the whole project might have already become reduced in their mental maps to having been 'only about racism'. This kind of redefinition and reduction of the year's literature course, which had in fact opened out a wide range of experiences to the students, appeared to become more widespread over the Media Week.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: FROM FICTION TO REALITY - RESPONSES TO 'MEDIA WEEK' DRAMA WORKSHOPS

Planning for 'Media Week'

From its conception the week which came to be called the 'Media Week' was intended to provide an extended opportunity for the students to work with the black theatre director and writer Olusola Oyeleye in order to reflect on, and pull together, related strands from the year's course. From our initial discussion set up to explore ideas, five months prior to the event, my notes record two particular points made by Olusola: the importance of the students "owning their own learning" and the need for a unifying theme for the workshops "like a thread running through various needles". We discussed the possibility of the central theme being 'the voice of the child', as a way of encouraging students to focus on their perceptions as young people today and opening up the challenge of considering what racism meant to them personally. Olusola undertook to read all the literature which the students had read during the project.

As Olusola was heavily involved in a production which included being away on tour, it was difficult to keep in as close touch as would have been desirable during this development stage of ideas. Following discussion with a local drama specialist I proposed a draft plan for five afternoon workshops in which the students would be invited by Olusola to join her 'in role' as part of a Theatre-in-Education team with the task of developing ideas - or a 'treatment' - for a television programme about what young people in a predominantly white area needed to be learning and asking about racism. The rationale behind the draft plan was outlined at the time as follows:

"- the students will be working closely and developing ideas with someone from the real world of writing and theatre, who will be both supportive and challenging;

- they will have the opportunity of drawing and reflecting on their own experiences over the past year's literature/drama course;
- they will be learning about crucial issues of selection, control and power within the media from an 'inside' active experience;
- being in role will offer them a certain safety in exploring their own responses under cover of the role;
- they will have the opportunity of interrelating activities within the National Curriculum's three profile components for English - speaking and listening, reading and writing - in a context which mirrors reality.
- the students' responses should provide significant evaluation material of 'where they are at' after their year's course i.e. the insights and perceptions they seem able to bring to their work.
- given the students' awareness of the school's ethos as one which finds racism unacceptable, the assumption of 'roles' theoretically provides space for students to articulate views they might possibly have been keeping 'under cover' in the more conventional classroom situations over the year."

I envisaged that the students would have access to a range of written and visual resources that they might wish to use (e.g. children's story books, both negative and positive, material on current experiences of prejudice and racism in Britain, material on America and slavery etc.) As Theatre-in-Education workers researching a programme, it seemed probable that the students would find it useful to talk to various people. I therefore proposed inviting some visitors who were concerned with racism in their working lives and who would be prepared to be interviewed by the students. Video equipment would be available, in order that the students could actually create samples of work, if they so wished, to form part of their 'treatments'. Their English teacher, Alan Parsons, would be on hand to operate the video and both he and I would play a service role to the students, as well as observing. On the final day I hoped to invite someone involved in television production with whom the students could share the results of their week's work.

While this draft plan retained the central notion of the students being encouraged to focus on their own perceptions as young people and being challenged to consider issues of racism in relation to themselves, it also incorporated a structure which was more pre-defined than Olusola and I had originally envisaged. While prepared to go along with much of the draft plan, Olusola was however not happy with the idea of herself and the students being in role from the very beginning. She argued strongly that it would promote the idea of dealing with racism only within fiction. She felt it was important for the students to know that racism mattered to her, and affected her, in her real every day life. Furthermore, after a year in which they had been exploring issues of injustice largely within the realm of fiction, she felt they should be ready to take on board as themselves the question of "What does racism mean to me personally?" Instead therefore of setting up the fiction of being in role, she would introduce the students to a Theatre-in-Education way of working (which would include role play) in order to develop their ideas and treatments for a programme. If they felt strongly enough and their ideas were good enough, she felt there was no reason why they could not even submit them to a television company. There was no need for their work all to be in the realm of 'pretend'.

Given the nature of the task being set for the students, ideally one would have wanted to be able to respond to the students' interests as they arose in terms of providing the resources they saw as relevant. Practically it would not have been possible to obtain either people or material resources at such short notice. It was therefore necessary to decide in advance on areas of focus, which inevitably removed from the students a significant degree of choice and self-determination. By a combination of chance and design, the interests of the visitors who agreed to participate linked closely with the various subjects tackled in Getting To Grips With Racism. Librarian, author and teacher-trainer Gillian Klein offered to be interviewed about resources and curriculum

matters in schools (issues in Programme Four); Reverend Kennedy Bedford and Sadie Kenway from the British Council of Churches Race Relations Unit were concerned with immigration and deportations (issues in Programme Three); Teacher-trainer and author Chris Gaine and community activist Saleem Gillings were willing to be interviewed on the development of racist attitudes in communities (issues in Programme Two); and finally, the producer of Getting To Grips With Racism, Peter Evans, offered to visit the students for the final session for an exchange of ideas. In addition, Millie Murray (already known to the students from two previous visits) agreed to come for the pre-final session in which it was intended the students would prepare their own programmes. Arrangements were made for the whole week to be videoed, mainly for my own recording and evaluation purposes but also for possible in-service purposes should it prove useful. A range of relevant poster-sized poems, pictures and news items were displayed on the walls of the drama studio, in addition to a picture exhibition focusing on the history of slavery to post-war migration from the Caribbean to Britain (previously used for the 'Motherland' drama, see Appendix 10.1).

The week's programme

From the outline of the week's programme (Appendix 12.1) it can be seen that Olusola began each day's session with introductory 'warm up' exercises, including a name game, as a way of encouraging the students to relax as well as to work collaboratively. Monday was devoted to introducing the students to the idea of themselves as a Theatre-in-Education team and to their task; to Gillian Klein and her work, focusing largely on teacher awareness of racism, particularly in resources; to my summary of their year's work on the project followed by an opportunity to hotseat their teacher

Alan Parsons¹; and finally to examining some books for themselves and interviewing Gillian. On Tuesday the focus shifted to issues of deportation, through discussion, shared reading and creating still pictures before setting up a mock television studio for an interview of the two visitors from the British Council of Churches. The deportation theme was continued on Wednesday, with the students creating campaign banners around a potential deportee in each group. The potential deportees were interviewed in turn by Chris Gaine in role as an immigration officer, afterwards sharing with the class their feelings about the interview. This was followed by a re-reading of a mother's letter (first read to the class on Monday) detailing the racist abuse to which her young daughter was being subjected by other children in her infant school (Appendix 12.2). In the manner of Forum Theatre, improvisations were developed of selected characters from the letter, with the audience commenting on the role play. The students were then introduced through a video excerpt to Chris Gaine's survey of attitudes towards 'race' among white children before setting up their 'studio interview' with the visitors. On Thursday, after a couple of initial exercises involving questions of visual stereotyping and the imagery associated with the words 'black' and 'white', visiting writer Millie Murray opened up the issue of possible prejudices existing within the students' families. Afterwards the students began to develop their own group improvisations which were finally videoed for sharing with Peter Evans on the final day. The scenes consisted of a staffroom with a teacher making racist comments about a child; a home where a white girl brings home a black boyfriend to meet a hostile father; a physical attack on a boy whose friend cannot protect him; and

¹ My diary records that "in retrospect (following Alan's hotseating) I wish I had included some affirmation of the value of the work the students had done in terms of 'English'." In summarising the course for the students I focused largely on the themes and activities undertaken without spelling out the elements of language work intrinsically involved.

a boy facing racist jokes and innuendoes in a shop. By inserting a brief poetry reading² Olusola aimed to reflect some of the issues, at the same time as broadening the context beyond black/white conflict. On the final day, after watching the videoed improvisations, Peter Evans discussed the question of communicating a message clearly and described some of the processes involved in making Getting To Grips With Racism, including his own process of personal change. What was intended as a brief exposition on how to make a treatment however developed into a debate around racist joking and language, with the students finally only having a short time to make up their own examples of treatment sheets.

Student responses to the week

Student responses to the week were extremely varied. While only sixteen students commented in their journals at home (as requested by Olusola), the majority of these wrote about a sense of learning and enjoyment. These positive comments were, however, accompanied by some reservations. Alison (the student with the lowest score on re-administration of the Racist Perceptions Scale) responded very fully, expressing the most excitement and involvement. She found various sessions "fun and lively" although she too spoke of parts which "started to drag on a bit". Along with a couple of other students who expressed initial nervousness about the presence of cameras, she felt "Shola and Gillian made you feel relaxed in front of the camera." Commenting on the first day she wrote:

"Our group talked about personal experiences of when we have felt as outsider this is something which I'd also like to put in the programme, but I'd also like to show the good as well as the bad relationships between black and white people."

Clearly expressed here was the need to start from the students' own personal experiences as well as a desire not

² Students shared the reading of Adrian Mitchell's 'Back in the Playground Blues' (Appendix 12.3), Pastor Niemoeller's 'First they came for the Jews' (Appendix 6.5) and Sola read her own poem 'We have come too far to turn back now' (Appendix 12.4).

simply to focus on racism and negative relationships, but also on positive experiences and possibilities. On the second day Alison wrote about the British Council of Churches' workers:

"it was a great way of interviewing them... Each session we are finding out different things about how black people are treated. Deportation must be one of the most distressing situations in anyone's life... say, Britain wants to chuck those families out, if one or both parents were born in a different country... there excuse is overcrowding which is utter rubbish... This session helped me understand and realise how people going through deportation must feel... I would try and do things to stop someone going through deportation."

Further on she wrote that "the last few days have given me confidence", adding that she had learnt "that there's not always right and wrong answers". In her journal, while mentioning that some activities were over-long, the only activity which she specifically named as unnecessary was the one on stereotyping as "we already knew this". Interestingly, her responses a few days later during Chris Gaine's evaluation had developed a somewhat different emphasis. While still writing that the week was enjoyable, she focused somewhat more on becoming "bored and tired" at times, stating, in contradiction to the earlier journal comment (about the interview on deportations) quoted above, that "I learnt nothing through interviewing". She attributed her enjoyment here to Olusola's personality, saying that "without her the lesson would have been boring and they would drag on."

The sense of Olusola being friendly and making the sessions lively and relaxed was directly mentioned in just over half of the journal and evaluation comments. For instance, Caroline wrote after the first day: "The whole experience was quite exciting, different, fun and interesting. We are learning about a serious subject and having fun also." After the second day, however, Caroline expressed a sentiment voiced by a couple of others, which on one level appeared to contradict the statements of students who felt they were encouraged to be relaxed and to have confidence in expressing themselves:

"No body really dared to have a go at or 'challange' Sola or the guests. I think we were afraid that she was going

to cut us off and have a go at us for thinking the way we feel."

This was obviously a major impression for Caroline to which she returned in her evaluation paper:

"It was interesting but I felt that knowbody wanted to say anything that was wrong or would hurt anybody's feelings... I think Sola was a bit overpowering. If we said one thing out of line or something she didn't really agree with she would jump down our throats. She was very friendly though."

Dan also confirmed that "Some people didn't say their true feelings about a certain topic because they thought it might hurt Sola."

Caroline's perceptions are particularly important to consider for two reasons. The first is that Caroline - who obtained a fairly low score both times on the Racist Perceptions Scale - generally responded in an open and sensitive way. The second is that I could find no evidence of Olusola 'cutting off' anyone or being directly and personally critical. For instance in the first session, when she asked for responses to Getting To Grips With Racism, she attempted to incorporate the critical responses to the programme in a positive way:

SOLA: What did you feel about the programmes?

JOHN: I thought they were a bit one-sided.

SOLA: Right, in what way?

JOHN: Well they were always against the whites. I'm not being racist (background murmurs and giggles) but they seemed to only look at the bad points of what the white people were doing.

SOLA: In the programme what would you like to have seen then?

JOHN: Well sort of the whole story, you know, everyone's side of the story.

SOLA: Right.. so from your own point of view if you were going to create a programme like that, what might you try to do in your treatment of it?

JOHN: Well I'd show the things that can help the blacks coming to England and stuff like that.

SOLA: Right so that's an aspect that you could do and work on too. Any other ideas? Come on, go for it!

MARION: I thought that they only associated it with the black and the white instead of like the Germans and the Jews and stuff like that.

SOLA: Right. In one programme there often isn't the opportunity to do a wide spectrum of things. So if you were working on one theme, might that be something that

you would be interested in showing.. those other areas maybe? One more.. be brave! There's a mega-smile there.. go for it!

GREG: Well, I thought that some of the aspects in it I didn't know about and I didn't know there was so much racism in this country.

SOLA: So that's another aspect. As a programme it was informative, yeah.. gave information. So there are lots of different elements that you might want to bring in.

While this transcript of Olusola attempting to draw in students with a range of perspectives in a collaborative way was an example from the first day, I could detect no notable difference in her manner of speaking to, and working with, the students over the week. She made it very clear, however, that racism concerned her and she was direct in asking students to clarify their own thoughts and feelings in relation to it. That was the challenge. Her approach to encouraging students to open out the issues and acknowledge them was evident in this extract of a discussion on the final day which followed Peter Evans showing the students how to make a television treatment:

SOLA: Can I just ask a question? Do any of you believe there is any racism in the school you are attending now?

GRAHAM: No. There's no coloured people in our school.

VOICES: Yes there are.

GREG: Yes.. sometimes in jokes.

SOLA: You think so?

GREG: In jokes.

SOLA: In jokes. OK. What else? I mean... do you believe that there are any people who have racist attitudes in this school? You said um because there aren't any black people.. yeah?

GRAHAM: Not many black people.. so.. I don't think that.. you know.. I don't think they have any racist attitudes.

SOLA: So do you have to have black people for there to be racism?

GRAHAM: Yeah.

VOICES: No.

SOLA: (asks for a show of hands "out of interest" of those who think there could be racism in the school)...I mean you know it's not the big deal.. it's the same thing as when we were talking about other people's attitudes and our own attitudes.. it's quite important sometimes if it's happening to then say where you think it's happening and that's the way to challenge it... If it's happening in your school and a lot of you feel it is happening... where is it happening? Michael, you put your hand up...

MICHAEL: Um.. in the playground.. with jokes and..

SOLA: Marco?

MARCO: Maybe some of the teachers are racist.

SOLA: Right. Is that something that you feel you've experienced.. you feel that there might be teachers in the school who are racist.

MARCO: Yes probably.. I haven't heard of it actually but there might be.³

SOLA: Anything else... this is not for you to make up out of the air. It's what you feel. If you feel that there is a possibility of that, then where might it be.. if it exists.

ALISON: Definitely in the playground.. and it could be in the classroom as well.

SOLA: Between pupils?

ALISON: And.. probably between teachers maybe.

SOLA: OK. Ian?

IAN: I think it's just between.. the pupils and I haven't really sort of heard of people being racist to black pupils. I think it's just sort of jokes between people.

SOLA: Ummm.

PHILIP: I think there is but I think it's more evident when not in school.

SOLA: When you're not in school. So where.. what kind of places do you think it becomes evident?

PHILIP: When they're with their friends.. it comes in when you're seeing someone who's a different colour.

JOHN: I think it could be somewhere in the classroom.. um say a white boy trying to get a coloured boy into trouble with a teacher or something like that.

I have again quoted at length in order to show Olusola's method of directly involving the students in exposing possible areas of racism in their environment. While clearly setting the agenda, she appeared to be encouraging them to acknowledge and clarify their responses rather than to be imposing her own. With no apparent evidence of Olusola actually 'cutting off' students in the recorded material (which did not however cover small group work), and bearing in mind that Caroline also perceived Olusola as "friendly", from where did Caroline develop her impression of Olusola 'jumping down their throats'?

³ Earlier in the week Marco had privately told Sola about his shock at a teacher once exhorting other students not to let themselves be shown up by an Italian, but he was not prepared to open this up in public.

Perceptions of 'one-sidedness' and anti-white bias

Before attempting to offer possible explanations, it is worth looking at other comments reflecting a common perception amongst students that there was a generalised bias against white people within the week. During Chris Gaine's subsequent evaluation session, John commented openly that the week had been "one-sided". Asked to write their individual responses to this statement, all twenty-three students present endorsed this view. It would appear that the messages which Olusola and the visitors conveyed were perceived primarily as coming from a perspective seen to 'favour' black people, rather than as a perspective which sought to reflect fundamental values such as justice and equality. Had the focus of the week been on the dangers of child abuse, for instance, it seems unlikely that those exposing the abuse would have been perceived as "one-sided" or that the notion of 'one-sidedness' would have even arisen. Thus the concept of 'balance' tends to be selectively applied according to the viewers' frames of reference.

Only three students, however, wrote completely negative evaluations of the week - Ian, John (the two highest scorers on the Racist Perceptions Scale both before and after the project) and Justin. While John maintained that only a few white people discriminate (implying that the week was making an unnecessary fuss), Ian wrote that "all that came across was that blacks are good and whites are bad. Is this true? Answer no not always." Justin perceived almost all of the visitors to have "absolutely totally no doubts [doubts]" and to have been "racist against whites".

A particularly full journal response was written by Michelle (the girl with the highest Racist Perceptions score). While in her evaluation she wrote that she "really liked Sola" and enjoyed some of the activities, in her journal she expressed aggrievement at what she perceived as constant accusations of racism embracing all white people:

"One thing I was really annoyed about, was that all we learnt about was how bad we treat the blacks, and how

they have suffered so much from us. Well I do think that it is bad the way some of them are treated, but not all of them are treated badly. Not all of us treat the blacks like slaves and do racist things against them. So it is not fair on us to say all the bad things we've done to them, without saying the good things as well. A lot of people out there are trying to help the black people and giving them encouragement, but it is still turned round to how bad we treat them. It is not fair on them, just because they are a different colour to us, but it is also not fair to think that we are all the same as some racist people. I'm sure that we have all told or laughed at a racist joke sometime in our life though."

It is not completely clear what Michelle was implying by the final sentence - whether she was acknowledging some degree of complicity in racist joking or brushing it off. Her perspective was essentially embedded within a perspective of white patronage (e.g. 'treating black people well' and "giving them encouragement") rather than a perspective focusing on entitlement to equal rights. Michelle went on to criticise the view "that coloured people can only get the lowest, dull or uninteresting job with only small pay" when in the hospital "I see quite a few coloured doctors and nurses"⁴. Interestingly, however, Michelle ended her journal entry by giving an example of how she felt her awareness had developed during the year:

"In the second year I hardly knew anything about coloured people, and I didn't know any either. Then one lesson we were given a sheet which said, 'What do you think of Indian people?' I put 'They are exactly the same as us, except they smell of curry.' That was what I genuinely thought of Indian people. I think it was because when I was in a lift once, there were some Indian boys in there, and they all smelt of curry so that was what I really thought of them. I suppose I focused it on those four

⁴ Michelle also reported asking Olusola the question "If black people are treated racially when they come to a white country, are white people treated racially when they go to a coloured country?" She could not remember the reply, but felt it had not been a "straight answer". Given the assumptions within the concept "white country" and indeed the whole question, it would have been difficult to give it a "straight answer". Furthermore, if Michelle had been told a simple 'no' - that white people were not subjected to racism in Nigeria in the same way that Nigerians experience racism in Britain - would she have believed it?

boys, and it was racist - which I didn't know at the time."

While coming to acknowledge that she herself had developed a stereotype of Indians on the basis of a single brief encounter with four boys, Michelle also felt (and resented) that all white people were being stereotyped as racist. She was not able to recognise that making statements on the basis of accumulated data (i.e. that it is harder for a black candidate to get employment than a white candidate or that a black person is more likely to be unemployed than a white) is a quite different process from stereotyping, in which generalisations are developed on the basis of very limited information.

Perceptions of an anti-white bias were, however, also expressed by students with low scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale:

"Sola gave me the impression that she thought the whole white population were against blacks! (especially us)."
(Tanya)

"Sola only covered the way we treat blacks, the bad way not the good." (Erica)

Neil, a generally thoughtful student, wrote:

"It seemed as though Sola was saying that it was just whites that could be racists... and the black could not be racist back because in their native language there weren't the words to call whites. I think that it was a poor excuse because the people in the forefront of racism are living in England or English speaking country, where there are words to call us."

Neil's comments refer to a discussion on the final day shortly after the extract already quoted where Olusola had asked students to say where they felt racism might be evident within their own environment:

ANGELA: It's not just black people though is it? There's quite a few Indians here.. who live here.. and it's not just your colour.. um it's your race.. where you come from as well.. American people. There's all sorts of jokes go round the school. It doesn't matter whether you're black or not, does it?

PETER EVANS (P.E.): But is there a difference between a joke about.. being called 'Fatso' or 'Specky Four-Eyes' (some muffled giggles) and being called 'Sambo'?

VOICES: No.

ANGELA: No, because it depends how strongly you feel about it when you're being called it.

GIRL'S VOICE: Yeah.

P.E.: I've got my own opinion to the answer to that one.. (pause) I think there is. It's very easy to say "Ah yes well we all get poked fun at school. I got called 'Four-Eyes' and we all call each other names. (VOICE: yeah) so what.s a racist name mixed in with it? It's all just fun and games and all that at school." Um.. but it might be worth thinking about. Is there a difference? And what that difference is...

DONALD: I wonder if blacks call um whites racist names you know?

P.E.: Yes?

GRAHAM: Yeah I think that they would probably.. that would only be if the white person had called the black person a name first.

DONALD (simultaneously): I mean is it the other way...

P.E.: Why do you think they do? I mean they do, yes. Why do you think they do?

DONALD: I don't know. Just to get their own back.

SOLA: Can I tell you that.. I come.. I wasn't born in Nigeria. I was born here. I was born in this country so I've lived most of my life in this country and the only name that we call people who are not black in Nigeria is 'ex-patriate' because Nigeria was colonised by the British and they called them 'ex-patriates'. Yeah? Now there may be other names but the language actually doesn't contain any words (P.E.: There aren't enough words) that are derogatory but Britain has.. but English has so many words as we discovered in the dictionary yesterday.. that have a different meaning for the word black. But our languages do not contain words which are derogatory. It is not in our languages to do that. So you need to talk.. think about that for yourself...

P.E.: ...(describing a school where the head had said he let pupils sort out name-calling for themselves and could 'give as good as they get')... I don't think it's a very helpful way of going about it. But the sad fact of the matter is that even if you accept that's a good way of doing it... the black kids run out of words because the vocabulary of the British language is just full and full of words of abuse for black people.

ANGELA: But if I tell a black person in the playground and I-

ALAN PARSONS (A.P.): But.. but the English language.. sorry.. the English language is full of words of abuse for.. for lots of other things as well.

P.E.: Well that's right.. I mean it's an appalling indictment of the English that they-

A.P.: Well it's not an appalling indictment of the English. It's part of the richness of the language if you want to call it that---- (P.E.: Yes, but I mean that-) it's picked up abuse from a number of areas from a number of other countries over several centuries.

(Murmuring from students - stirred by adults expressing a difference of views?)

Following the intervention of Alan Parsons, the English teacher, the debate moved away from the concerns being expressed by students and continued for a short period among the three adults, with Olusola linking the history of the language to the history of the country:

A.P.: Well the history of the country itself and its culture are of course inextricably interwoven. I mean----
SOLA: Right, so therefore the history of the country... is based on slavery.. and is based on racism. I mean look at the history of the country and look at the development of the language... You are talking about the fact that it's the richness of the language. We're talking about what those words mean, yeah? So what's that transmitted to the young people who are being taught?...

A.P.: Well obviously richness in the sense of variety.. that's exactly what I said. I said... one of the characteristics of the English language as a language is that it's a language that is full of synonyms. I mean inevitably... one of the bad consequences is bound to be that you can have synonyms for abuse as well as everything else.

There are various points that could be made about this difference in perspective which emerged amongst the adults. Alan Parsons was probably perceived by his students as rallying to the cause of 'English' and 'the English', seen to be under attack. It is unlikely that they realised they were actually also in the midst of an intense 'knowledge about language' debate dealing with a significant component of the English National Curriculum - the issue being to what extent language can be properly understood abstracted from its social context. In the circumstances, it was not surprising that Neil interpreted Olusola's comparison between terminology in Nigeria and England to mean she believed that "it was just whites that could be racist". He did not take on board the point, reinforced in particular by Peter Evans, of the considerable discrepancy in the number of abusive words associated with being black and with being white within English itself.

It is possible to see in this discussion students beginning to try and air a concern that the focus of the week appeared to be solely on racism against black people. Irish-born Angela (a low scorer on the Racist Perceptions Scale) clearly wanted to broaden the focus when she asserted "It's not just black people though is it?...", and it is likely that Donald was not alone in wanting to ask "if blacks call whites racist names". Unfortunately neither of these issues were adequately explored with the students themselves and I shall return to this shortly in dealing with the learning context.

Returning to my original question about the source of Caroline's perception that Olusola was ready to "jump down our throats" and the general sense of 'one-sidedness', we need to ask whether these perceptions could have been allayed or addressed in some way, since they functioned as barriers to students opening themselves out to new learning. Two areas need to be examined - psychological processes in the students themselves and the learning context itself.

Psychological processes

It is difficult to assess what difference it would have made had the workshops been led by a white presenter. I have already referred to the selective way in which the concept of 'balance' was applied in the view that Media Week gave black people a preferential focus, rather than perceiving the central concern to have been one of justice. Clearly the fact of Olusola being black must have affected the students' responses and it seems possible that the sense of threat lay partly in the combination of Olusola being supportive to students - in the sense of encouraging them as young people to express themselves - while at the same time challenging them to look honestly at the attitudes and practices existing within their own school, homes, peer groups, and indeed, themselves. Given the feelings of guilt this may have induced in people whose thinking about racism was limited largely to the zone of personal morality, it would not have been

surprising to find someone whose questions were as potentially disturbing and uncomfortable as Olusola's, cast in some kind of threatening 'aggressor' role. Her personality, which came across to many students as attractive (e.g. "fun", "bubbly", "jolly", "lively"), probably significantly allayed this kind of image overlay and militated against a straight-forward dismissal of what she said. However the fact that even students such as Caroline and Tanya, with low scores on the Racist Perceptions Scale, perceived her as threatening in some way, points to the importance of broadening conceptions of racism beyond the realm of individual attitudes, morality and guilt. Without learning how to distance oneself by developing a wider historical and social understanding of how racism operates, it is not possible to examine in a rational way how it affects the experiences and perceptions of all of us who live in a racist society. This is a question to which I shall return in the final chapter. A further psychological reaction, off-setting possible guilt feelings in some students, may also have been to project their own personal tendency to stereotype onto Olusola, thus assuming that she stereotyped all white people.

Problems relating to the learning context

There was also a feeling amongst some students that, in Neil's words, they were "going back over ground covered". Rather than seeing the opportunity to explore further some of the issues raised in Getting To Grips With Racism, it seemed that for some students the topic was now seen simply to be a 'message' which they already 'knew'. While this may have been a defensive psychological mechanism to justify a lack of interest, this response may also have been partly due to the television series not having been accompanied by sufficient student-centred active learning so that it came across too directly as simply 'knowledge to be imbibed by the viewer'. Despite the strong student-centred focus within the original rationale for Media Week, circumstances in reality led to it at times falling into the same trap.

One contributory factor was that in the process of ensuring that a range of people would be available for the students to consult, the structure became too 'top heavy' for some students who felt themselves being overloaded with 'input'. The problem was partly one of assuming the students to be more advanced in their awareness than was actually the case. On the first day for instance, when students had the opportunity in their groups to look at various children's books and to consult Gillian Klein, many of them appeared to be lacking in confidence to do this on their own initiative. Both Olusola and Gillian commented that a similar age group in a London school would be likely to be much less reticent. The St Benedict's students were not only more sheltered than students in the metropolis but they were generally accustomed to fairly directed learning. In retrospect it was possible to see that, as with the four television programmes, it would have been preferable to have reduced the number of visitors in order to allow the students more time to get an active grasp of one or two issues, rather than expecting them to be ready to make connections across the wider range. They needed more space to work through the various arguments themselves, given perhaps some adult guidance. The comments quoted earlier about people holding back things they wanted to say, as well as the way in which neither Donald's nor Angela's questions - about the universal nature of racism and targets of oppression other than black people - gained space for student discussion, would suggest that the learning context was deficient in this respect.

Apart from this question of active student involvement, it was the case, however, that the television series did carry a strong message condemning racism, as did the Media Week implicitly through the selection of visitors and their various commitments to combatting racism. Furthermore, while there were occasional references during the week to racism against other groups, such as Irish and Jewish people, the central focus was clearly on white racism against black people. While

the four programmes of Getting To Grips With Racism also focused exclusively on the major form of racism in Britain, namely that directed against black people, it was not until towards the end of Media Week that a reaction to this focus began to emerge. As quoted in the previous chapter, the Teachers' Guide acknowledged that the 'prejudice + power' definition of racism, while reflecting "the higher levels of institutional racism", might not completely match the students' own experiences (Chapter 12: 289). It recommended that if students raised the question of black people also being "racist", then it was important not to deny their own perceptions at a local level of anti-white or anti-Asian prejudice and behaviour. But it was important to discuss why this happened.

For the students on the project, the question of whether black people might not also be racist was probably more theoretically than experientially based, and may well have reflected a defensive reaction at perceiving themselves to be the sole target for criticism. Nevertheless it needs to be considered whether the problem was not compounded by the reduction of the complexities of racism in the films to the neat formula 'prejudice + power' (see Chapter 1: 8-9). It is clearly essential to develop an understanding of institutional racism and the relationship between racism and power. However acknowledgement that racism is a universal phenomenon and multi-layered in nature - and that it intersects with divisions of class and gender - should not in itself detract but deepen an examination of racism within one's own society. If questions about other forms of oppression and whether black people can be racist are openly discussed and not pushed aside as simply white avoidance strategies, it might also be psychologically easier for white students to begin to acknowledge the implications of living in a racist society where the major beneficiaries are white people.

The question of personality factors

In presenting the students' responses, while I have frequently related these to their apparent frames of reference, I have not focused much attention on personality as such. Ever since Adorno et al's The Authoritarian Personality (1950), there has been considerable debate on the role of personality and individual psychological dimensions in the formulation of prejudice. As indicated in my introduction, research points to the multi-dimensional nature of prejudice, with a focus on individuals in their relation to groups, (Sherif and Sherif, 1953; Sherif, 1966; Pettigrew, 1958; Klineberg, 1968; Tajfel, 1978; Davey, 1983) and indeed the deep-seated structural nature of racism (Hall, 1981). Nevertheless personality, however socially shaped, remains an integral component of individual responses. An interesting example of what appeared to be rather different responses to the issue of racist joking, inextricably connected with personality, was provided by Michael, John and Ian, all of whom at the same time shared common elements in terms of racist frames of reference.

While both John and Ian expressly rejected the value of Media Week, Michael (whose score on the Racist Perceptions Scale was not quite as high as theirs) suggested from his written comments, both in daily journal comments and evaluation, that he felt he had learnt something. For his evaluation he wrote "I learnt more on racism and how it effects people". However his journal comments focused simply on how people were hurt by deportation and racist insults rather than reflecting any understanding of how racism functions:

"I think that racist jokes start off with fact and then starts going out of proportion like for instance jokes about black people being like golly-wogs, people have taken a little bit of fact that golly-wogs faces are Black and blown it all out of proportion by calling Blacks golly-wogs. Sometimes when this subject comes up I sometimes find it hard not to laugh and yet I wouldn't ever hurt a black person by insulting he or she in front of other people. I think that laughing at racist jokes is wrong and people very often laugh even if they don't think the joke is very funny, just to save face in front of their friends. I have been in situations that I have

found very hard not to laugh otherwise friends think what a matter with him. If a person was telling me a joke one to one and I didn't find it very funny I wouldn't laugh then. How I look at it is that it only starts with one person and others might just see your point. I think that this doesn't only happen to children but with adults too."

Clearly Michael had neither knowledge of the historical origin of golliwogs and how they reflected white perceptions of black people at the time, nor of their function in perpetuating those images. His major concern, however, was that of laughing at racist jokes. While honestly acknowledging his own susceptibility to group pressure, he nevertheless admitted that "laughing at racist jokes is wrong". After the third session which included a focus on racist jokes, Michael came up to Olusola close to tears, admitting that he had told such jokes without realising how much they hurt. Together they discussed not only the possibility, but indeed the difficulty, of not joining in the group camaraderie in these circumstances. Michael ended by saying he would try to dissociate himself in future from racist joking. However already in his subsequent journal comment, this was somewhat modified: he would try not to laugh when in a one-to-one situation when he "didn't find it very funny". A further dimension to Michael's position was that on the first administration of the Racist Perceptions Scale he had responded to the item 'Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun' with a morally appropriate 'no', while on the second survey (four months after Media Week) he replied that he was uncertain.

While Michael's conceptual understanding of racism remained extremely limited, it is more difficult to assess his responses on an affective level. For instance, what were the implications for future learning of the experience of the week with Olusola? As mentioned previously, he came across as one of the more sensitive boys in the class and there were indications that he had opened up at that point to acknowledging a personal challenge. But given that his overall Racist Perceptions score remained unchanged (at medium high),

one could perhaps dismiss the possibility of future change as fairly hypothetical. Nevertheless at the time there did appear to be a qualitative difference in the responses of someone like Michael from the plainly negative reactions of John and Ian.

In contrast to Michael's ambivalence, both John and Ian endorsed on both surveys the statement that racist jokes were "just a bit of fun". When Michael, close to tears, had approached Olusola to tell her he had not realised how much racist jokes actually hurt people, John accompanied him, to tell her that he too had told racist jokes, but confidently added "I don't mean to harm anyone". It seemed plain that he meant to go on telling them and exonerate himself by not meaning "to harm anyone". Ian's manner was different from both Michael's or John's, his usual style being to subvert 'under-cover', often through jokes. However, he finally came out into the open on the final day of Media Week on the issue of jokes, when I overheard him muttering the letters "B.O.R.I.N.G" to his group and asked him why he felt that way. Peter Evans had just set the students the task of devising their own treatment sheets and, time being short, had allocated a theme to each group (drawn from the list of ideas previously 'brainstormed' by the class). By chance Ian's group had been given the theme of 'racist joking'. As I had no tape-recorder to hand, the following conversation was recorded from memory shortly after it took place:

IAN: B.O.R.I.N.G.

DAN: Boring.

BN: Why do you think it's boring?

IAN: He didn't give us any choice. He told us what to do.

BN: What's your objection to the theme of racist jokes?

IAN: They don't mean anything.

ERICA: Everyone tells them.

IAN: What jokes could we tell then?

BN: When you say they don't mean anything, who are you talking about? The people whom they are directed against probably wouldn't agree.

SIMON: My mum is Irish and she doesn't mind them.⁵

IAN: Angela doesn't mind them. She was laughing at some on the way back from France.

BN: ...How do you match up what your religion says about caring for one another with telling abusive jokes?

DAN: But we're not perfect!

IAN: That's why we go to Confession!... It's not fair you bringing our religion into this.

BN: Why not?

IAN: Because it's nothing to do with it.

The tone of these students was clearly defensive and by this stage I had obviously become associated with a particular position. Indeed Ian went on to accuse me of wanting to impose my views on them, a perspective which links to the overall sense of 'one-sidedness' amongst the students. Ian thus expressed in an extreme form a current running throughout the group, his personality operating inextricably in conjunction with the deep social factors shaping the responses of the group as a whole. The following week, during Chris Gaine's evaluation session, Ian had turned the argument of young people needing to examine established views into an implicit defence of his racist beliefs against unnamed adults "who try to be persuasive":

"Towards the end I learnt not to take things as being true just because an adult tells you. They are not always right. Most people try to be persuasive if something is their option and they want you to think like that. Most of the things we did were other people's options."

Given that issues of racism are marginalised within our society - and particularly so in a predominantly white area - the underlying resistance of white students to being asked to focus consciously on the major form of racism in Britain, namely that which is anti-black, was not surprising. It is possible that had we stayed with our initial idea of developing the week around a theme such as 'the voice of the

⁵ The previous day Simon had told me his mother usually covered up the fact that she came from Ireland! When finding out about his family's history of migration he had also noted that his mother, who had spent some of her childhood in Liverpool, had also experienced "a small problem with her accent because it was a very strong liverpolian accent".

child' as a way in to addressing the issues, the activities may have remained more 'relevant' to more of the students, affectively as well as cognitively. Nevertheless the problem remains of how to enable white students to move beyond the confines of their own limited experience, 'knowledge' and perceptions of relevance, rooted as they are in the current social structure.

The teacher's responses

The transcript quoted earlier of the discussion that arose on the final day about language and racism, in which Alan Parsons challenged what was being said by Olusola and Peter Evans, indicated that it was not only students who may have felt under attack. The brief but intense debate about language amongst the three adults revealed a sharp divide in perspective, the visitors looking at English in its social and historical context ("based on slavery... based on racism") and the teacher viewing it, at this point, as a largely decontextualised system ("one of the characteristics of the English language as a language is that it's a language that is full of synonyms... one of the bad consequences is bound to be that you can have synonyms for abuse as well as everything else").

While I had been increasingly aware as the project progressed of increasing dissatisfaction on the part of the teacher in terms of what he felt to be his customary objectives as an English teacher, in the Media Week this emerged fully into the open when he was hotseated on the first day by Gillian Klein and the students. In his replies he revealed his fundamental scepticism about the legitimacy of the project as 'English':

DONALD (following on from G.K.): Did you ask the question, .. why hadn't we done racism before Mrs Trewhela⁶ came?

ALAN PARSONS (A.P.): Because it wasn't a topic which was thought of as necessarily something that could be done in an English lesson. I mean it's this kind of topic which

⁶ The surname by which the students knew me.

one presumes is taking place in other lessons like RE for instance. I mean it's not.. it's not really the sort of topic that English teachers think of necessarily as being related to English. Do you follow me?...

DONALD: Mm.. So.. so why did we do it then if it's not anything to do with English?

A.P.: Er because Mrs Trewhela came along with the idea of... doing her research and she coupled her research idea on racism with some research into what is known as reader response and that's the kind of thing you've been doing when you've been having extracts from books and extracts from poems and doing a lot of you know bubble.. bubble diagrams and bubble comments... that seemed to be something which was very interesting and valid from the English Department's point of view in particular.

.....
IAN: What did you think of doing a subject for English when you thought it should be done in RE when Mrs Trewhela asked you about it?

A.P.: Bluntly I think the RE department could have contributed a lot more in terms of time...

TANYA: Did you enjoy and learn.. a lot from this.. course? (speaking very quietly)

A.P.: Er.. on and off.

TANYA: What do you mean by "on and off"?

A.P.: At times I enjoyed what I was doing at other times I began to wonder whether we were going to saturation point.. in other words there was simply too much of one particular thing being thrown at you for too much of the time.. and I did detect on a number of occasions shut-down.. in classes. In other words I could feel the lead screen coming down.. simply because.. you were feeling "Oh we are going over this ground again".

G.K.: Does that mean you felt that you were reaching saturation point?

A.P.: I had reached saturation point yes.. but I also sensed that the class was.

The students' questions were extremely pertinent and I was particularly surprised by Tanya, who usually only spoke out in class if directly asked a question. Given Alan Parsons' conception of the project as not strictly 'English', it was not surprising to find some students expressing doubts, particularly in their evaluations, about what had happened to their 'English'. Tanya, for instance, reflected the dilemma:

"The group discussions were good. They made me more confident. This course helped my English because it gave me more confidence in myself...."

However, at the end of her evaluation she wrote in relation to me:

"I think she's helped us a lot with our self confidence. Mind you, she's mucked up our syllabis around a little. Because we are moaned at by our English teacher that we can't write proper English and we are really illiterate. But we have spent all of our time with this case."

Once again, as observed earlier, one can see the whole literature course in danger of being reduced to a confined notion of racism, here described as "this case". Instead of feeling reassured that she had been introduced to a wide range of inter-connecting human experiences, which had been explored through the main English National Curriculum profile components (Speaking and Listening, Reading, Writing), Tanya had the feeling that she had lost out on 'English' - even despite her own sense of increased self-confidence.

A fuller picture of the effect on the students of the teacher's view of English may be seen in their evaluation comments, reported in the next chapter. It was fortunate however that the extent of the teacher's sense of alienation from some of the fundamental ideas behind the project only emerged fully into the open for the students at this final stage, although they had received previous intimations of his unhappiness about their standard of English. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the final session following Getting To Grips With Racism, Carl had asked the teacher Gerald Carey whether they had been doing "less English" and should not have been doing "more grammar". Gerald Carey's response had been to affirm how the project had expanded their opportunities for using English and furthermore that it had the full support of the County's English Adviser.¹ The question of the frames of

¹ The English Adviser was a member of the project's Steering Group and with signs of concern being expressed by Alan Parsons even in the first term, I asked him to visit the school and look at the work being done. He assured both the teacher and myself that he was very satisfied with both the kind of activities being undertaken and the work produced by students in the first term. Given that the teacher's concern not only continued but increased, I asked the English Adviser for a further opinion of a cross-sample of students' work at the end of the project. Once again he assured me that it met his expectations.

reference of teachers in exploring issues of racism with students will be addressed in the final chapter as well as the critical question of the overall school context affecting both teachers and students. Alan Parson's own concerns about what he called the "transactional aspects of English" - such as punctuation, spelling and grammar - cannot be divorced from the reality of St Benedict's banding system (as opposed to mixed-ability grouping) which implicitly promoted competitive academic values. Correct use of written Standard English, including accurate punctuation and spelling, are traditionally some of the key factors in students being allocated to bands of different status. While at the practical level it would be possible, and useful, for more explicit 'knowledge about language' work to be incorporated within an English course exploring racism (encouraging students to reflect on and consciously develop their understanding and use of language), it will be necessary to examine the more fundamental dilemma of attempting to teach about equality in a structurally unequal system.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF THE COURSE

Triangulation of student evaluation

This chapter will draw largely on the students' written responses to questions about the course in an external evaluation by Chris Gaine (Appendix 13.1), as well as on their assessments of its personal value written for Gerald Carey in the final Religious Study session following Getting to Grips with Racism (Chapter 12: 302-3). I shall draw supplementary evidence from two other evaluation sheets (drawn up by myself) in which the students reviewed their own responses both in reading journals and focused writing (e.g. passage-response sheets) over the year. The reading journal evaluations (Appendix 13.2) were completed prior to Media Week and the assessment of focused writing or 'response sheets' (Appendix 13.3) was carried out immediately before the external evaluation, four days after Media Week. Chris Gaine's external evaluation as well as the reading journal assessment (conducted by Alan Parsons) and response sheet assessment session (conducted by myself) each lasted forty minutes, although students who wished to spend more time on reviewing their journals were able to continue at home.

The external evaluation

As mentioned previously, Chris Gaine is a Senior Lecturer in Education and Racial Equality (West Sussex Institute of Higher Education) and author of a book dealing with issues of 'race' in predominantly white schools (Gaine, 1987). The students had met him a few days previously during Media Week when he had engaged in role play and interview-type situations with them. They were aware of his particular interest in the attitudes of young white people towards issues of 'race' but it was made clear to the students that his brief for this evaluation was to find out something of their feelings and thoughts about the project course and elements within it. The point of having an external evaluation was to provide a distancing mechanism for reflection on the project whereby the students could express

their responses to a third party, including perhaps reservations and criticisms they might not have expressed directly.

Prior to the session, I gave Chris an outline of the course, pointing to the areas in which I was particularly interested to have external evaluation. I recommended to their English teacher Alan Parsons that neither he nor I should be present. However the Deputy Headteacher sat in on the evaluation at Alan's request. The session was recorded, in order, as Chris explained to the students, that I could check on how he put the questions to them. While the students were obviously aware of his perspective, in his introduction he stressed the need for them to be honest. He hoped his manner of questioning would have a minimum of influence on their responses and assured them that they should not worry about hurting anyone's feelings. It was important that they should say what they felt had worked and what had not, as a similar course might be attempted by other teachers. The major part of the session was taken up by students writing, each having been given a blank piece of paper. However, this was interspersed by Chris talking with them and gathering some responses verbally, which sometimes led to the shape of the subsequent question. For instance, after introducing a topic through a brief discussion, he would then focus on a particular question or issue, asking all the students to write down their responses on paper. The atmosphere was thus one of rapport rather than of a formalised assessment conducted through a completely pre-set questionnaire. Unfortunately only twenty-three of the thirty students were present for the external evaluation: seventeen out of the eighteen boys and only six of the twelve girls.¹ The male student was absent because of temporary suspension but I am unsure as to why half the girls should have been absent. I was told that student attendance tended to decline towards the end of term with parents booking pre-

¹ Those absent were: Marion, Angela, Hannah, Julia, Gaby, Jacky and Terry.

height of season holidays. If this was indeed the reason for absence, then this might suggest a rather stark gender differential i.e. that it was considered less important by parents for girls to miss school than boys! Given gender differences in responses during the project - and the girls' lower average score on the Racist Perceptions Scale - this imbalance in evaluation returns needs to be borne in mind when reading this chapter.

Students' perceptions of the year's work

In response to Chris Gaine's question about what they had been doing, all but one of the students perceived the content of the course as directly related to racism or, more generally, to "the way different people are treated" (Peter). Interestingly, almost half the students made no reference at this stage to responding to texts, drama and other such aspects.

In the context of this initial question no one openly stated feeling that there had been any bias towards studying anti-black racism. Tanya, for instance, wrote that it was "all linked to racism and different types of people, not only blacks, but with religions etc." A minority of students, however, immediately revealed their own value judgements. Ian and John indicated here, as elsewhere, their irritation at a focus on racism. John's resentment was such that he clearly could not recognise the contradiction between acknowledging the diversity of visitors on the project and his perception that I was associated with just one subject matter: "We had poets that came in, and generally well known people. Plus when Mrs Nido came we always dealt with the same subject." In contrast to this kind of underlying resentment, Marco wrote explicitly that "we have been learning how to be antiracist. Our class is quite privileged as this program is a one-off."

Students' perceptions of the course in relation to other English work

In response to Chris's subsequent question about whether the course was at all different from previous or other English work, a third of the students focused on there having been less 'grammar' or less written work (i.e. essays and comprehension exercises). Students commented generally on more oral work through tape recording and group discussions; more reading; and more varied activities such as meeting authors and other visitors, watching relevant videos, having their responses noted, and engaging in hotseating and related drama.

Given the teacher's formal separation much of the time of 'language work' from literature, it was not surprising to find students making this demarcation, apparently unaware that they were also practising and extending their own language use through reading and responding. Neil, for instance, wrote:

"Less time has been spent on the language side of English. We have done more work connected with the books we have read, like the reading journal, reader response, character sheets, discussion tapes."

Neil's definition of "the language side" appears restricted here to work in which there is a conscious focus on language itself. While I argue in my final chapter for closer connections between work on response to literature and an explicit focus on language, the evaluations also reveal the need for students to be made aware that response work implicitly involves language development.

The effect of Alan Parsons' views on what properly constituted English may well have been reflected in a number of responses. Ian wrote, I suspect provocatively rather than conscientiously, of work being neglected because of the project: "We still have an essay in red rough [book] called the Gang which needs copying up from back yonder." Simon's comments, however, reflected insecurity rather than resentment: "I feel that even though some parts of the project were intresting I would rather have learnt some english

properly." Simon was perhaps particularly vulnerable given that he had been 'moved up' from the lower band to the middle band and clearly wanted to stay there. It is worth recalling that after the first few weeks of the project he had written in his journal: "Altogether I am enjoying myself. I have [done] more work in the last few weeks of English than I have in the whole second year."

Just under half the group appeared to question the value to be placed on 'talk'. These included students who otherwise felt positively about the course. Five students categorically felt talking did not help them with their English, including Marco who commented that "we weren't having any grammar" and John who stated that "the stuff with Mrs Nido had nothing to do with English". A further six students expressed some ambivalence. While they had found the group discussions enjoyable - which for Caroline had "improved my knowledge", helped them "talk more freely" (Tony) and be "more open" (Michelle, Ian) - they felt talking had not helped their writing: "We didn't get to do enough Normal english like essays, punctuation, spelling etc." (Caroline). Alison put the case quite clearly:

"I liked the discussions. In a way it helped our English orally but when it came to writing essays it didn't help and we always got blamed for not punctuating and spelling correctly in our essays but it wasn't our fault when we were doing Racism nearly every lesson."

Students are clearly alert to signals emitted by teachers. The extent to which the teacher's attitude therefore actually affected the value the students placed on 'talk' is a matter for speculation.

On the positive side, just over half the students present responded without reservations that the talking and group discussions had helped their English, giving reasons such as: expanding their vocabulary (Carl); encouraging them to put their ideas together quickly and coherently (Dan); giving them confidence to express themselves (Tanya, Donald, Graham, Greg, Peter, Simon); and listening to other people's points of view

(Louise, Neil, Justin). A broad expression of all these aspects was included in Erica's reply:

"I liked the talking because, especially in small groups because I understood more and contributed more. It did help me with my English as my vocabulary was widened, and my imagination grew."

An interesting response concerning the project as an English course was provided by Justin (whose score, however, only slightly decreased on the second Racist Perceptions survey from its medium high level on the first). A student who seemed to prevaricate a great deal and to avoid committing himself to particular view-points, Justin wrote:

"These English lessons I felt were a whole lot more educational than my normal English lessons and I think I'll remember the past year much more than I'd remember normal English lessons. I also know a lot more about the history of the world and the way people think which, I thought, was extremely useful."

It is not possible to assess the extent to which the kind of value Justin was attributing to the project was in fact a product of him perceiving it as being different from what was seen as "normal", and therefore special. Even if this was a factor in his evaluation, the central question has to remain how work on racism can effectively become part of a normal English course in a predominantly white school.

Effect on students' reading interests

To determine the effect of the course on students' future reading interests with any accuracy would be extremely difficult. The replies to Chris Gaine's question about "What kind of books would you like to read in English in the future?" can only be regarded as an indication of the students' own perceptions of what they enjoyed reading. The main feature amongst boys suggested a desire for 'action' connected with guns, space, war, science fiction, horror stories and suspense. Other responses included wanting more books like Buddy (Paul); "the follow up to Buddy and also more about Britain and the British Isles (Michael); "books set in the past with catastrophes" (Dan); "a great variety and a bit

of old English literature" (Carl); more about eastern countries (Graham, Donald); "more like the same books that we have managed to read" (Peter). Amongst the girls there appeared more of a tendency to mention people. Responses included a desire to focus on teenage problems and "real life situations which are happening to ourselves at this time" (Alison); "more about people and how they cope with awkward situations" (Erica); "the kind of books I'd read at home instead of 'educational' books that are mostly boring" (Louise). Tanya and Caroline presented an interesting contrast, with Tanya asking for "more books which had young people in... like Buddy" because "all of us could relate to it more than Roll of Thunder or Friedrich." Caroline, however, appeared to be aware of maturing as a reader and wanting to move beyond what she already knew: "I would try to have a wide variety of books - not just love stories like I used to read last year. I would move on to more advanced books like Waiting for the rain and Buddy".

Memorable sessions with visitors

Most students tended to single out the sessions with Millie Murray and James Berry as ones they particularly recalled enjoying (e.g. they were "fun"), relatively few mentioning Dr and Mrs Engel, who from journal comments at the time had appeared to make quite a deep impression in talking about the experience of Nazi Germany. Although the question of sessions being "fun" was significant, time was presumably also a factor in this later assessment. The students had got to know Millie fairly well over three visits (the most recent being the week before the evaluation) and James Berry's visit had taken place the previous month. The science teachers and Richard Finch also appeared at a disadvantage in being perceived primarily in a teaching context and therefore not in the same league as Millie Murray or James Berry who appeared to have been seen primarily as entertainers. A number of students had commented after James Berry's visit that he had brought his poems to life for them, which was reflected too in Justin's comment

that "I suddenly had a whole new outlook on poems which was good."

Chris also asked students if they had anything to say about the taped and video interviews (with James Berry, Sheila Gordon and Mildred Taylor). Some comparison was made with live visitors, two students actually complaining that you could not get a video or tape to respond directly to you! Once again, earlier written comments suggested that some students had become at least temporarily involved at the time in the interviews and issues to a greater extent than was indicated by this evaluation some months later.

Evaluations of drama

There was unanimous agreement that hotseating should be retained in any future course. In response to being questioned about "the good and bad bits about drama", many students mentioned how they enjoyed 'acting out' scenes, with some students contrasting this activity with being bored when people just sat talking. A few mentioned that the link with the literature had been interesting and a few recalled enjoying the work at the Drama Centre with Richard Finch. Only Alison explicitly noted some difference in drama approaches between teachers:

"The good bits about drama this year are when we act out scenes and do still pictures, when we went to the drama centre that was good with Mr Finch and when we did drama with Mrs Williams. I didn't like the way Mr Parsons forced us to answer questions and made us lose our confidence and the way we weren't allowed to volunteer ourselves, he picked us."

Alison's reaction seems to derive from Alan Parsons' concern for performance which led to a certain emphasis on the final 'product' to be shown and judged by others (even if only implicitly). Perhaps the greater sense of relaxation she felt with the approach of Richard Finch and Elly Williams (the teacher who worked with the students on the second 'Motherland' drama, moving in and out of role herself - see

Appendix 10.1) was related to a shift of focus away from performance towards the drama process itself.

Evaluations of Media Week

This has already been dealt with in detail in Chapter Thirteen where it was shown that while only three students (Ian, John, Justin) were completely negative, many students experienced conflicting responses. Over half the students wrote about liking Sola or finding her "fun" and "lively", or being friendly and making people relaxed. However some students also wrote about a sense of having held back what they had been thinking because of not wanting to "hurt" Sola's feelings. All the students present without exception wrote statements agreeing with John's view (expressed verbally to Chris Gaine) that he felt Sola was "one-sided" and biased against white people. Some students perceived the week as only focusing on racism against black people and they felt they were being blamed. They also felt that they were not being told about the good things white people did.

Evaluations of 'Getting to Grips with Racism'

This has been commented on fully in Chapter Twelve where it was noted that in this final evaluation, taking place three weeks after the final Religious Education session and after the Media Week, negative responses to the television series outweighed positive ones. Signs of interest and involvement with the films at the time of showing seemed to have been forgotten or dissipated. Only five students wrote solely positive comments.

Students' perceptions of me

Prior to answering this the students were reminded that they were unlikely to see me again and should write freely. Comments ranged rather widely from perceptions of my personality and how I affected their work to my perceived relationship with Alan Parsons:

"a nice lady but a bit grumpy towards us as she only joked with Mr Parsons but she was nice." (Carl)

"I think that Mr Parsons was feeling overpowered by her presence because she was practically telling him what to do in his lesson." (Dan)

"Mr Parsons was much better when she was in our lessons." (Greg)

"I liked it when Mrs Truella came in, it made the english lessons more interesting." (Louise)

"I liked having Mrs Naido in the classroom because she wasn't too forceful in her manner when putting across her point." (Neil)

"I liked Mrs Truella very much she kind and always ready to help you if your stuck." (Michael)

"She seemed to think we were enjoying the work she gave us, when I know most of us weren't." (Erica)

"I think she was thinking that we liked doing all the things that she gave us to do. We had too much homework writing responses. She wasn't strict enough with us sometimes." (Alison)

This last comment reflects the dilemma I occasionally faced when on my own with the class. For instance, if Alan Parsons was late, should I take on the teacher role or simply remain as researcher-observer of a rising noise level? In general I attempted to detach myself and hold back from 'being the teacher' where possible, although in practice I was probably seen in the role of a teacher by the students, especially since the hierarchical structure of the school emphasised clear demarcations. In addition, on a couple of occasions in the final term when Alan Parsons was away, I actually took the class in order to complete our novel reading. In talking to the students throughout his evaluation, Chris Gaine actually referred to me as a teacher rather than researcher. It is difficult to know, however, whether this would have substantially affected the students' responses.

Of the two students with the highest Racist Perceptions scores, Ian expressed more negative feeling than John, even though on the surface he had always been polite to me:

"I liked Mrs Nido because she explained things. At the beggining she got on my nerves because she kept on giving us stupid bits of paper." (John)

"I didn't really like Mrs Naido a lot and I would of preferred not to of had her." (Ian)

Ian did not elaborate on this. Although Donald and Tanya associated me with derailing the English syllabus (Tanya at the same time feeling she had been helped in self-confidence), no-one openly expressed resentment at being the subjects of research. While not suggesting that they had been tricked, Paul nevertheless felt that I "didn't need to have a false name". One of the most interesting comments, however, came from Michelle, the girl who had had a medium-high score on the first Racist Perceptions Scale which decreased slightly on the second:

"I think that Mrs Trewella has worked really hard with us. I think that she has taught us things that we didn't know, and helped us to see things in a different way. But I think she should've showed us that there are some white people helping the blacks. It would've been good to see the other side. I have found it interesting, and quite good. I have also learnt things which I didn't know before." (Michelle)

The sentiment about wanting to be shown good things about white people is one Michelle had expressed previously, for instance in commenting on the Media Week. While still revealing a certain defensiveness and a conception of racism still confined to notions of personal hostility, Michelle nevertheless appeared to be making a very genuine acknowledgement that she had begun a process of reperception, some evidence of which I shall give shortly.

Evaluation for the Senior Teacher - students' perceptions of personal value in the course

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, students were asked by Gerald Carey, the Senior Teacher, to write what they felt had been of value in the course and to add what had been of no value to them. Subsequently they also had the opportunity to review their reading journals and their response sheets. This triangulation of evaluation data enabled me to a certain extent to assess whether students' overt statements about the value of the course were borne out by

their other comments. One has to bear in mind that particularly in relation to the task set by Gerald Carey, in the context of a Religious Study session, one cannot exclude a possible element of 'appropriate' response.

The majority of students wrote very positively about the value of the year. While just under half the boys openly expressed a sense of personal gain, all the girls except Angela suggested that their own knowledge and understanding had been broadened in ways they felt meaningful. Angela, however, simply wrote that they had "learnt about racism", her verbal comments to Gerald Carey indicating that she felt she already knew all about racism. From her reading journal review it was apparent that she perceived herself not to have been challenged into new thinking. These responses need to be seen in the context of the school's system of sorting students into top, middle and low bands. Angela's rather dismissive attitude may well have partly reflected the desire to prove herself better than the hypothetical 'average' which she was designated.

I have already referred to Michelle's sense of movement in her own perceptions. This was further borne out in her reading journal review, where she identified a particularly strong response she had experienced to the video on Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and a realisation that "it isn't very fair":

"When we started to learn about black people I thought blacks were equal to us, and I didn't really realise they had had trouble with racism. So it was new to me. I have really learnt about how blacks were treated and how they were slaves. I never saw that they were treated that way, so I was very surprised. I am glad I know about, because if I meet a black person, I am more aware of what they have been through, or their grandparents. I don't really know any black people, but I don't think I would have anything against them if I met one."

While Michelle's acknowledgement of unfairness is an important step forward for her, one can sense from her last sentence that there remain deep assumptions she has still to unearth. The phrase "if I met one" suggests an intrinsic sense of

otherness with the hypothetical "one" being conceived of as a representative of black people.

Some quotations selected from other students who indicated that the course had made a real contribution to their learning should help to convey the tone of their assessments:

"I think that during this year I have learnt more about racism in more detail than I would have done anywhere else. I also have learnt that Black people live in their own country having to face things like racist remarks and even more serious things than this." (Alison)

"A year packed with excitement... My understanding of the world and its cultures has grown." (Hannah)

"A valuable thing that I have learnt about this year is what actually is happening in the world to other people. I have learnt about racism, predudice and the war and I really value the experience of having someone to do a project with us which taught us alot that I wouldn't have known otherwise. I like seeing what other people notice and their point of view." (Caroline)

"This year has made me think about Racism - mostly about the subtle things - like in History books when they give a very one sided view. Also in children's books the stories about 'Golliwogs' and so on. This year has made me not except everything I see or read and this is a good way of seeing things." (Jacky)

"The one thing that was a benefit for the whole year was that is made me more broader minded. At first I thought that I wasn't racist but after this year, I've realised that I was, slightly, like: I wouldn't drink from a colour person cup etc..." (Marion)

"In our class we have just gone into great depth in the few different cultures that have been atacked strongly by whites. I am glad that we have gone into great depth because I never actually understood about it all... it is the year I think that I have learnt most about so far in my life." (Peter)

"We have had a lot of follow up work, with each book which has opened up different ways of thinking. There weren't any bad points about this course, it has been interesting throughout the year, however the filling in of the reading journals became a bit tiresome after the novelty had worn off... My understanding has increased a lot about the history of racism." (Neil)

"In Getting to Grips with Racism I felt like I was rejecting Racism and I thought was I doing enough or could I do more about it." (Greg)

Several strands run through these and other responses. A central one appears to be the sense of being opened up to difference - different experiences, people and perspectives - accompanied often by a sense that they might otherwise not have had this 'knowledge' of "what actually is happening in the world" (Caroline). Julia was open about how reperception had led to some ambivalent feelings, writing "...it made me see white people in a different way and I'm not too sure I like them".

Only Neil, however, remarked that he felt his understanding had increased about "the history of racism" or indeed mentioned the issue of history. While the course contained a variety of elements which could contribute towards developing historical understanding, for much of the time this was implicit rather than explicit.

While Tanya wrote about a growth in self-confidence through being asked to express herself, Louise commented on the value she placed on the reading journal "because it is a private thing and it is easier to write down what you think and how you feel, rather than saying them." The pressure of work produced some complaints, especially from a few girls who tended to be conscientious. There is an interesting contradiction between this sense of pressure from too much homework (generally in the form of journal writing) and the other rather common perception that the course did not involve as much written work as a 'normal' English course. It would seem that unmarked written work did not really 'count', once again suggesting the inescapable influence of the overall school context, especially of a banding system in which marks ultimately determine your status.

A distinction obviously has to be made between the students' own evaluations of what they felt they had learnt and their

actual learning, as well as real changes in their perceptual frames of reference and behaviour. For instance, both Marco, who had come from Italy three years previously, and Carl, whose mother was Italian, wrote very positively about the course. As re-affirmed during Chris Gaine's session, Marco wrote in his journal about feeling "quite privileged", adding:

"I think that the whole english course has been educationall to the class (even so, some people take it for granted)... And even if sometimes I am a little lazy, I very much appreciate this course."

Carl referred openly to his own position as an Italian:

"I think that this course has been very interesting from the beginning... I feel I have learned a lot from the course which has on several occasions linked with me being Italian."

These positive appreciations were not however reflected in a decrease in explicit racist perceptions in these two students as assessed on re-administration of the Racist Perceptions' Scale. Although other factors may well have intervened in the four month period between the end of the course and the final survey to explain the rise in scores, the general proposition remains true that we need to treat the students' broad statements about their own learning with some care. Equally the survey results themselves cannot be regarded as definitive. Marco's slight increase in score is nevertheless interesting given some of his strong statements against racism. Analysis of his responses to particular items (for instance his continued indecision about the harmfulness of abusive name-calling accompanied by a move from indecision to agreement on the item 'Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun') reflects possibly an attempt to remain low-profile in terms of his own identity difference by conforming to peer group norms. He had, for instance, not wanted to speak publicly about his own experiences of racism, expressed privately to both Sola and myself. This slight hardening of attitudes might also possibly be related to Stenhouse's speculation about an 'idealism/realism shift'

(1982: 85-6) between pre-test and post-test amongst students who nevertheless remain relatively open-minded.

While the increase in Marco's score was slight, Carl's increase of ten points (from very low to the upper end of the medium-high range) was the largest increase for any student in the class. I have suggested previously (Chapters 4 and 12) that this may have partly indicated an anti-authority reaction. His responses frequently seemed to contain an element of ambivalence. In his reading journal review he revealed

"... I myself have been in the firing line of racist names. I am in fact Italian and naturally tanned so why should I also be called Nigger or Paki, if people stopped and thought about it they might notice the difference or what they are doing results in some one being unhappy."

Was Carl perhaps only objecting to being called abusive names which he felt did not apply to him as he was 'not really black', rather than objecting in principle to any racist abuse? Four months later, the second survey indicated a change in Carl from rejection to acceptance of both racist joking and name-calling. We are then left with the question of whether courses exploring racism may not end up producing some 'better-informed' and more resentful racists. Certainly Ian, the student who expressed the most open resentment, felt he had gained some "bits of information", at the same time as his racist attitudes were becoming more entrenched:

"Most of the work on Blacks and South Africa I didn't gain much from because it's a common ocurance on T.V. I didn't find it totally boring because there were bits of information I did gain."

Very few other students made directly negative comments on the course as a whole although there was some indication of remaining essentially uninvolved and disinterested. Both Dan and Donald however expressed their ambivalence:

"I think that all this years books are all to do with racial discrimination. I found this idea boring but I can see why it was done because if our generation stopped being racist then the next and the next generations will also stop being racist so blacks can live without fear of

turning a corner and find 'PAKI'S OUT!' on the wall."
(Dan)

"My one benefit is that I've got to know people more (blacks and whites). My one criticism is that we've only studied rasism and disagreement and conflict between people. I found this booring and uninteresting." (Donald)

Finally I was left to consider how to interpret the following response from John, whose racist frame of reference appeared to have remained unshifted, judging from the second survey:

"There are two sides to every coin. I have learnt to look at both sides. I used to look at just my side."

Interpreting this pessimistically, one might say that the course would have enabled John, like Ian, to promote the racist perspective of his "side" from a position of better information. If one wishes to be optimistic, one might argue that the ability to look and listen to the other side at least provides a basis for communication, without which personal change is totally impossible.

The overall picture

Comparing responses to Gerald Carey's question about the value of the course to replies in Chris Gaine's evaluation, one receives a rather more positive overall picture from the first. Even taking into account that half of the girls were absent from the external evaluation, this is not surprising. Gerald Carey asked the students specifically to think and write about what had been of value to them, after which they were free to add any negative comments. They were clearly engaged in an educational exercise and one cannot discount the element of compliance. Chris Gaine's session, on the other hand, was set up precisely to distance students from any sense of obligation to provide 'appropriate' responses. His questions were also designed to allow students to differentiate elements of the course and thus to express more multi-dimensional reflection. Nevertheless there were no responses from the two sessions which appeared directly contradictory, nor from any of the other evaluations. The small minority who felt mainly negative had also found some

elements of value, while the reverse was true for the majority. The overall picture which therefore emerged was of a course which contained a number of popular elements and which was stated by most students to have been of value, but which was certainly not without criticism.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: REINFORCING OR CHALLENGING RACISM? PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

Assessing the project in terms of its original aims

The original aims of the project were "to investigate the potential for certain works of literature which contain strong indictments of racism from the writer's perspective to extend white students' empathies; to challenge ethnocentric and racist assumptions and concepts; and to develop critical thinking about the nature of our society." Before considering to what extent these aims were realised, I wish first to refer briefly to the quantitative data gathered before and after the project, as well as to one of its key features - gender.

The quantitative data

From the outset I was aware of the difficulty of accurately assessing shifts in the students' personal frames of reference and that quantitative survey data would need to be treated with caution. The purpose of the latter was to provide a broadly descriptive overview to supplement and help illuminate the qualitative data which provided the base of the research. I have already dealt in some detail with the results of the second survey (Chapter 4), administered four months after the end of the course. The gains towards non-racism amongst some of the project students (e.g. a decrease on the Racist Perceptions Score of 1.3 in the girls' average score) were offset to some degree by an increase in explicit racism amongst others (e.g. an increase of .8 in the boys' average). However, in relation to the whole year group - in which average scores increased for both boys and girls - the results in the project class indicated a small movement in the desired direction. The project boys' average increase was in fact due to a sharp increase of explicit racism in a minority of boys. These findings are in keeping with those of most previous researchers concerned with the effects of teaching about 'race' to school students (Bagley and Verma, 1982: 4). In his range of hypotheses for developing a coherent theory of

teaching about 'race relations', Stenhouse (1982: 273-7) included two which he framed in a more generalised context:

"HYPOTHESIS 25: Teaching about any subject or topic in association with which an attitude or outlook is valued by the teacher (i.e., there are affective as well as cognitive aims) can tend to lead to more students moving in the desired direction with regard to attitude than in the undesired direction.

HYPOTHESIS 26: When such teaching meets the educational criterion of appeal to the judgement of those taught, a fairly substantial minority of those taught will, during teaching, shift attitude in the undesired direction."

Both these broad statements apply to the present project although they do not take one very far. A couple of other hypotheses however refer to the need for long-term reinforcement as well as visible actions and policies in the school and social context. This is something to which I shall return later.

The question of gender

None of Stenhouse's hypotheses, however, feature the question of gender. As mentioned in Chapter Three, a number of researchers have suggested possible gender differences concerning attitudes to, and learning about, 'race' (Bagley & Verma, 1975; Marsh, 1976; Williams, 1986; Gaine, 1987; Cohen, 1987). Both my quantitative and qualitative data indicate that we need to know more about how different socialisation processes in terms of gender, as well as the experience of sexism, affect the openness of white students to addressing issues of racism. In relation to a project aimed at reducing prejudice amongst London primary school children, Cohen (1987: 11) writes that:

"Gender was... a highly significant variable in the pattern of response in both schools. Boys consistently displayed more overt and extreme forms of racism or ethnocentrism than girls. Girls were much more likely to identify with other oppressed groups, and to construct story lines in which 'every underdog has its day'. They also showed much greater confidence in handling the photostory and drama work, and used these symbolic forms to explore dynamics of conflict in personal relations; the boys in contrast, were much more likely to act out rather than represent such conflicts..."

Cohen's commentary carries many resonances for my own research, despite the dissimilarity in the project areas, suggesting deeply embedded differences in male and female response patterns and modes of learning. The implications are wide-ranging, reinforcing the notion that it is impossible to tackle racism effectively in isolation. Put bluntly, if a predominantly white classroom and school give priority to white male experience, what is the likelihood that racism can even begin to be properly addressed? If Gaine (1987: 46) is correct in his assertion that girls are easier to teach about 'race' than boys, what are the implications? While I did not set out with a particular focus on gender and my project does not provide the systematic testing which Gaine acknowledges is necessary, nevertheless it tends to bear him out. This is seen most clearly in relation to the project's first aim, namely that of widening students' empathies, although the concept of empathy is not without problems.

Extending empathy

Evidence of 'empathy' with characters experiencing racism has been based on my subjective assessment of students' involvement with the text from what they said or wrote. This evidence also needs to be viewed in the context of the construction of responses - albeit for the most part unconsciously - according to what is perceived by students as 'appropriate' both in terms of literary and moral norms (Eagleton, 1985). Furthermore, as indicated by Purves and Beach in their review of the literature on reader-response, differences in response might well reflect "differences in the ability to express oneself about one's response, and that the response type is less related to intelligence than one might suspect" (1972:17). In other words, the fact that most of the boys tended not to write as fully as most of the girls in their reading journals cannot necessarily be taken as lack of response or lack of empathy amongst boys. This is not to deny potential gender differences in response but to relocate the focus for investigation and explanation.

At least three notable examples of gender differences across the class emerge from the reader-response data. First, when reading Friedrich, 39 per cent of the boys compared with 17 per cent of the girls suggested they would advise the narrator to hand over the rabbi to the authorities, on the basis of self-preservation. The second example occurred when the students were asked to determine whether the narrator's parents were guilty of not trying to offer more protection to Friedrich's family against the Nazis. At least 89 per cent of the boys found them not guilty on the grounds that they had acted in terms of self-preservation. In contrast, only 34 per cent of the girls decided they were not guilty or only partially guilty. However the majority of girls, who felt the narrator's family should have done more to protect their Jewish neighbours, showed more uncertainty and self-conflict in coming to their decision than most of the boys who at least in appearance were clear-cut in their pragmatism and operation of self-interest. It also seems noteworthy that the only boys in the class who were not prepared to exonerate the narrator's family turned out to have Jewish relatives themselves. Further detailed individual investigation would be necessary to clarify responses such as these and to determine how they might relate to a reader's sense of empathy with different characters in the novel. Since many of the students who exonerated the narrator's family had nevertheless displayed earlier signs of not only empathy, but sympathy, with Friedrich and his family, how did they reconcile the two positions? If the mental processes are similar to that of those who justify war while stating that any loss of life is regrettable, one needs to question the limitations of simply having 'empathy', or indeed sympathy. Writing in the context of Western responses to human destruction caused by allied forces in the Gulf War, Lifton (1991) refers to the process of dissociation or "psychic numbing, the diminished capacity or inclination to feel" through inner division of the individual mind separating out knowledge from feeling. Did most of the girls, however, tend to place a greater value on sympathetic

feelings, namely that having identified and sympathised with Friedrich and his family, did they feel more obligation to give weight to the Jewish perspective? Presumably their greater uncertainty would make them susceptible to change, but were these girls at least more inclined to maintain a connection between knowledge and feeling?

The third example of a marked gender difference in responses across the class occurred in relation to Waiting for the Rain, when the students were asked to write personal statements to Frikkie and to Tengo after confronting each other with their conflicting perspectives. While the majority of girls clearly supported Tengo's claim for justice - thus transcending the white perspective - only a third of the boys took this position. A third of the boys remained close to the white protagonist's view and the remainder were undecided. Here again would be an interesting area for further investigation. To what extent were boys rooted in the white perspective because of Frikkie as a young white male? If the protagonists were female would responses have been different? In all three examples of gender differences quoted above, to what extent are the majority of female responses possibly reflective of these girls having been socialised to a greater degree than the boys into empathising with others in positions different from their own? Are their responses reflective of a greater desire to apply, or be seen to apply, over-arching principles of morality? My data appear to bear out Squire's (1964) finding that adolescent girls are slightly more inclined as readers to make prescriptive judgements than boys. If this is so, then we need to enquire how this process functions and develops in young readers. A longitudinal case-study focused on the responses of selected male and female readers might prove illuminating.

Thus while it is possible to state that the works of literature chosen for the project all revealed the potential to engage and extend empathy amongst white students, both male

and female, the study nevertheless threw up a number of questions relating empathy to issues of gender. However, in relation to exploring issues of racism, one of the clearest examples of the limitations in considering response in terms of empathy alone is provided by a student such as Michael who maintained a medium high score on the Racist Perceptions Scale and a conception of racism limited to notions of personal hostility, yet showed what appeared to be genuine concern within the fiction to characters experiencing overt racism. One is reminded of Hall's statement about the deep resistance of racism "to attempts at amelioration, good feeling, gentle reform" (1981: 61).

Challenging racist assumptions and concepts

While the educative potential of literature is considerable, it relies on the meeting of minds - Rosenblatt's 'transaction' (1978). Literature written from a strongly anti-racist perspective is in itself unlikely to be sufficient to challenge racist assumptions except for those in some way already open and ready to hear. Even where a reader's empathies are extended across previous boundaries - where sympathy has perhaps been aroused for a character or characters usually viewed as 'other' by the reader - this does not mean a reader will automatically shift the boundaries of 'otherness'. It is more likely that Allport's "re-fencing device" (1954: 23) will operate, by which an 'exception' is acknowledged so that any break in a predetermined mental field is hastily mended. Given that the 'some of my best friends are Jews' syndrome happens frequently in real life, re-fencing is likely to be achieved with even more facility in relation to characters or situations encountered in fiction.¹

¹ Michael's indecision on the second survey in response to the item 'Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun', following his close-to-tears conversation with Olusola about not meaning to be hurtful in telling such jokes, is indicative of the power of re-fencing.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data nevertheless provide instances of racist assumptions and concepts which appear to have been successfully challenged. What would be difficult to untangle would be the direct effect of the literature itself as distinct from activities linked to it or indeed extraneous factors, particularly in relation to the second survey conducted four months after the project had ended. For instance, once the students had interacted with Millie Murray, whose specific brief was to challenge racist assumptions in the students' construction of characters and situations in Buddy and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, that experience would have been integral to any further responses. Even the activity of being asked to write a specific response, which inevitably requires an element of focusing and reflection, constitutes an intervention in the text. As with the first aim concerning the extension of empathy, I think the qualitative data suggest that the literature chosen had considerable potential for challenging aspects of racist thinking and generating a sense of 'new learning' for a number of students. Of the various examples which have been quoted in the chapters on the novels, indicating a move beyond empathy into some kind of reperception and shift in 'frame of reference, I shall confine myself here to two. Both contain an emotive and personal force which I would like to think is of some significance:

"It made me feel angry and embarrassed to admit to myself that my South African cousins are like that... It's disgusting the way black people are treated, after all, it is their country and white people took over the country and we treated them as heroes, as great explorers, when really they were invaders." (Louise on Waiting for the Rain)

"This story was powerful and sad. quite clearly one of the most brilliant books I've ever read... This book has given me a new perspective of how blacks were treated." (Paul on Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry)

As with empathy, there are obviously qualifications and questions concerning the extent and effect of experiences of reperception. To what extent, for example, do individual

instances of reperception begin to 'add up' and further, when they do begin to connect, as seems to be the case with Paul's sense of "a new perspective", will this actually inform any aspects of every day life for him? Or is he just becoming a product of Eagleton's "moral technology of Literature", namely "an historically peculiar form of human subject who is sensitive, receptive, imaginative and so on... *about nothing in particular*" (1985: 5). Reading Waiting for the Rain certainly caused Louise to reflect on her own South African cousins, their attitudes and behaviour. I shall return to issues of the relevance of new learning when reviewing the project's third aim, but first I wish to look at the matter of negative responses and students becoming further entrenched in their racist frameworks.

It has sometimes been queried whether teaching about 'race' is advisable if it is only likely to have a positive effect on those who are already more open-minded, while it is likely to deepen the negative reactions of those with already closed minds. In other words, is it worth achieving what often appear to be only small shifts in a positive direction in some students if the price is to create at the same time others who become 'better-informed racists'? Although our understanding has increased of the pedagogy, context and fundamental conditions necessary for anti-racist teaching to avert the harmful effects revealed by Miller (1967; 1969) of a short dose of liberal studies teaching about 'race' to male day-release apprentices, nevertheless the problem can be a real one. This is especially so if the conditions under which a teacher is working are substantially constrained. However, given at least a reasonable amount of control over teaching circumstances, the choice as it is presented above is oversimplistic. Firstly, one can argue that many results in education are frequently not immediately observable. It is quite possible that the effect of a learning experience may not be apparent until some time later. Secondly, while there are undoubtedly students for whom prejudice is "lockstitched

into the very fabric of personality" (Allport, 1954: 408) in what I would regard as a pathological sense, in that it provides a buttress for low self-esteem and a sense of inadequacy, for many it does not serve such a specific psychological function. Put another way, the majority of white children brought up in a racist society are not personally vicious or psychologically inadequate. While racism is undoubtedly "lockstitched" into the very fabric of our society and its culture and thus the frames of reference through which children are encouraged to view their world - so helping to shape a predominant national identity - the fabric fortunately contains other strands and its culture contains other voices, offering alternative constructions of reality. Certainly students who tend to being open and tolerant need exposure, just as much as those who tend to being closed and intolerant, to those other voices and other ways of seeing. It is precisely those students for whom there is most chance of understanding that 'race' is a lens through which they have been socialised to view themselves and others - as well as a chance of realising that they are in a position to reshape their own lenses. While there was evidence in the project of students on occasions revising racist assumptions and concepts, little work was done in this crucial area of deconstruction of images, which is something I will discuss in my review of the course.

Developing critical thinking about one's own society

The third aim - relating to the development of critical thinking about the nature of our society - was probably the most difficult to achieve. Dependant on realisation of the first two aims - extension of empathy and the challenging of racist notions - it was concerned with the degree to which the students could be led by means of the selected literature into looking critically at their own society and thus themselves in their own community. Circumstances led to the British context being addressed rather more directly than originally planned, through showing Getting to Grips with Racism, without the

mediation of literature apart from one short story. It was in this final section of the course, in which the students were being asked to move from fiction to reality, that some defensive responses began to emerge, and indeed in the case of a few students to crystallise. The major question remains of how to create a supportive framework for challenging racism and the racist society to which the young people belong, without directly attacking their own sense of identity. While racism is seen as something 'out there', it can perhaps be faced and decried. But it is another matter when it is identified as something functioning 'in here' i.e. in one's own school or worse still, in one's own head. This was the particular challenge presented to the students by Olusola Oyeleye in the final Media Week and it clearly caused some disturbance.

Related to this difficulty of looking at themselves and the part they themselves play in relation to society, was the significant lack of socio-historical awareness not just in the project class but across the whole year group. In the second survey, with students fourteen to fifteen years old and some in their penultimate year of school, only one out of 177, referred directly to the experience of colonial domination in response to the statement "When I think of Irish/Asian/West Indian people..." This ignorance and ignoring would appear to be intimately linked with Hall's depiction of racism in Britain as "structured absence" (1985) and the "attempt to wipe out and efface every trace of the colonial and imperial past" (1978: 25). Within this overall national context it is enormously difficult to enable white students to understand racism in a social and historical context to which they themselves are inextricably connected, even if they do not personally harbour feelings of hostility. It is possible, however, to identify a number of features - or lessons to be learnt - relating to the project course, pedagogy, teacher and school which could help to effect change.

Review of the course

The need for a culturally diverse curriculum

While the books read on the course were not a typical selection for a year's reading at St Benedict's at the time (all of them being new additions to department stock), they would not have been an unusual combination in many London schools for instance. Given the generally high level of engagement of the project students with the texts and positive journal comments written by most students in their final reviews of the various books, English teachers in predominantly white areas need to question the basis on which they are selecting literature. Scafe writes of "the value to all students of an English curriculum which is culturally diverse and receptive to change and innovation" (1989: 3). While Scafe is referring to the integral value of diversity for a culturally inclusive English curriculum which is capable of change and redefinition, the term 'multicultural literature' is frequently used to imply books featuring black or ethnic minority characters, which are tacked on to the static mainstream of traditional literature. A crucial feature of the project was that the students were not introduced to the books as 'multicultural', but as part of a normal English literature course. However the teacher's revelation to the students in the final Media Week that he felt the project was not strictly 'English' shows at how deep a level racist conceptions are rooted.

The need for a combined focus on language and literature

While it was agreed from the beginning that half the students' English time would be devoted to the literature course and that the rest of their English work would remain separate to accommodate other aspects of the curriculum, the separation of work on literature and on language is an artificial one. Literature is a construction of experience - by the writer for the reader. What has been read has been written, with language both the writer's tool and scaffolding, and as Gilbert reminds us "Far from being a transparent medium, language is

ideologically constructed" (1987: 248). With literature providing a powerful means of entry into the imagined experience of others, at the vitally important affective as well as cognitive level, a focus on the language of literature should aim to help students investigate some of the ways in which that experience has been ideologically and culturally shaped. Furthermore, what are the ways in which their own perceptions and responses are shaped by the language they themselves receive and use?

While arguing for the need for a combined focus on literature and language in English work, I am thus also arguing for students to become more conscious of themselves as language users and learners, constantly extending their own abilities with words. When students spend time talking to each other about their responses, they should not be left to feel (as did some of the project students) that this activity might be detracting from their progress in writing.

The need for students to deconstruct their own 'knowledge'

An extremely useful, although brief, specific focus on language was carried out in relation to Waiting for the Rain when students were asked to compare two versions of South African history (Chapter 10: 244-5). This examination of the construction of value-laden images could be extended to visual texts and developed into a wider active investigation into the language used in their own sources of history e.g. books, newspapers, television programmes. In this kind of study students would be encouraged to ask questions about selection, the power to select and the effect these selections have on their own constructions of 'knowledge'. Similar work could be linked equally well to Friedrich or Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. As authors writing specifically for young people, Richter and Taylor both offer voices of resistance against the imposition of authorised history and the theme emerges within each novel. Within the project time however, although students heard Mildred Taylor describe how her motivation for writing

was intimately linked with her awareness of the distortion of her own family's history in what she was told at school, there was no space for them to explore the issues more thoroughly for themselves.

Enabling students to begin to deconstruct their own knowledge, and particularly their own racist knowledge, is to introduce them not only to a fundamental cognitive skill, but to a means of dealing constructively with that sense of moral guilt which frequently produces defensiveness. Understanding how their perceptions, and those of their parents and grandparents before them, reflect frames of reference within the society - and how these are shaped by historical events - provides students with a distancing mechanism from guilt of the past, but at the same time does not free them from responsibility for the present. A pedagogical framework with this aim in mind needs to place students actively at the centre of their own learning. Otherwise they are simply being offered one authorised version for another. This is a theme I shall pursue below in relation to questions of pedagogy.

The need to integrate cognitive and affective learning

Enabling students to create links between the study of history and of literature considerably enriches the potential for learning. Carl's comment that Friedrich had brought home to him that "the Jews who died during the time of the Nazi dictatorship were real people and not only facts and figures" was particularly telling, as was his final comment:

"There is only one question which remains in my mind which is, what the subject of the persecution of the Jews has to do with us and why in History matters like this are only skipped over without touching the heart of the matter."

What he is referring to here is the essential alienation of cognitive from affective knowledge, not simply as a process of "psychic numbing" in response to particular events as described by Lifton (1991) but as a process of dissociation which is deeply structured within our society, just one indication of which is its traditional Science/Arts divide.

While Carl was suggesting that the novel Friedrich took him into the 'heart', it would appear that for him History only entered the 'head'. Yet unless we can draw on students' hearts and give those feelings of human connection combined status with the head, the question 'what has this to do with us' is not surprising. Or as Singh (1988: 93) writes:

"Rationality must... be cultivated within a moral, affective framework which provides the pre-condition of the individual attaining his/her own well-being as well as that of others. Education must be seen in terms of the development of the 'whole person'."

The students' puzzlement at taking part in a science lesson linked to the course emphasises the point about our transmission of selected constructions of 'knowledge' through traditionally defined 'subjects' embedded within the school structure. Yet racism is intricately woven into life and any serious attempt to follow the threads will take one across compartmental boundaries. The National Curriculum has now enshrined subject boundaries in law while identifying "preparation for life in a multicultural society" (National Curriculum Council, 1990) as a 'cross-curricular dimension'. The tight regulation of content in most National Curriculum subject areas will yet further militate against the flexibility needed for genuinely cross-curricular thematic work on racism at secondary level.

The need to find points of connection with the students' own experience

It is of course possible to identify many areas which did not receive proper attention within the project. For instance, given that people perceived as 'Asian' are particular targets for hostility (Williams, 1986), a brief reading of Farrukh Dhondy's story 'K B W' - even combined with the coverage of anti-Asian racism in Getting to Grips with Racism - was quite inadequate. However the course was not set up with a claim to being comprehensive, but rather with a view to illuminating problems and possibilities in relation to addressing racism through literature-based teaching. Using Buddy, for instance,

as the initial text was successful in providing a context to which students could immediately relate. Because of time constraints, an area which was not however explored by the students was anti-Irish racism. Given that almost a third had Irish relations, opening up this area might well have helped these students establish some kind of personal connection to racism and some of the more subtle ways in which it operates by looking at experiences within their own families. The issue of assimilation and the question of the children of Irish migrants covering up their origins could have been brought to the surface, enabling a base of personal knowledge to be explored which would inform reading a story such as Moy McCrory's 'Touring Holiday' (McCrory, 1988). One can only surmise, however, the extent to which reflecting on anti-Irish racism would have made a difference to the perspectives from which students viewed the rest of the course.

While within drama students were given opportunities to explore their own experiences relating to injustice, it is difficult to assess to what extent they then transferred that knowledge to other situations. Certainly the general popularity of drama seems to derive from the greater freedom it provided for students to determine their activity and thus build on with their own experience. There were also examples revealing that a particular drama activity had informed a student's perception of an issue in a novel they were reading and as such had helped them to connect more personally to the issue. Drama has the potential to unite affective and cognitive learning and to draw on the students' own experience as a way to getting under the skin of someone else. But as mentioned in Chapter Eleven it is extremely difficult to assess the 'internal action' of participants within drama, let alone assess any longer term 'external' results.

Questions of pedagogy

While the project methodology ensured a certain amount of space both for student autonomy and collaborative learning,

the personal style of the teacher who undertook the project turned out to be predominantly didactic, traditionally formal, and by his own acknowledgement disciplinarian. Interestingly, within the drama room his manner was somewhat more relaxed. My observations strongly reinforce the findings of others in the field about the importance of establishing an appropriate classroom context for raising issues of racism. I have suggested elsewhere in relation to Carl (Chapter 4: 102-3; Chapter 12: 289) that the dramatic and disturbing rise in his Racist Perceptions score from very low to medium high on re-administration of the survey might well relate, at least in part, to an anti-authority reaction. In addressing racism with white students, one is challenging them not only to extend their range of empathy but to question their frames of reference and thus elements of their own identities. It is therefore essential to create an ethos in which trust and respect form the basis for developing the self-esteem necessary to undertake such self-critical activity. In order to promote open-mindedness in students, it has also to be practised, and one therefore requires an ethos of tolerance. Finally, there is little point talking about equality and the inter-dependence of human beings if students are not encouraged to collaborate with each other.

A notable feature of the project class was a sharp contrast in the degree of female participation in whole class discussions as opposed to small group discussions. In the former, conducted in teacher-centred question-and-answer style, only a minority of girls ever volunteered an answer or opinion. This contrasted also with their use of the reading journals, in which they generally wrote more prolifically than most of the boys. Interviews with the girls suggested they were generally far more conscious of being 'shown up' in public than many of the boys and were thus less willing to enter into adversarial style debate, even where they knew there was not necessarily a right or wrong answer.

Fortunately both small group discussions and responding in reading journals offered students space to express themselves in varying degrees of privacy. The reading journals served a particularly useful function as a space for self-reflection and for articulating sensitive responses they might not wish to make public. As Louise wrote: "It's easier to write down what you think and how you feel." Important though it is to have a range of alternative spaces for expression, they were still not a solution to male dominance within the classroom. Given that the project girls tended to score towards the non-racist end on the Racist Perceptions Scale and that most research suggests a greater tendency amongst girls to be more open-minded and tolerant, it is of prime importance to ensure that their voices are heard in the wider classroom.

The role of the teacher

Within the kind of pedagogical framework I am outlining as necessary for addressing racism, the role of the teacher is undoubtedly a difficult one. It is one both of support and challenge. Unless the teacher can create a trusting and supportive atmosphere, students will merely become defensive. And unless there is challenge, students will remain unchanged. Furthermore if the students are to come to understand that racism is not just a matter of negative and nasty attitudes and feelings, but that 'race' is a pervasive social lens which is constantly shaping much of their 'knowledge', then they need to see their teacher involved in the same process of questioning and self-scrutiny. The teacher has to enable what is often hidden and submerged, to come to the surface, to create the conditions under which that "largely unacknowledged and unverbaised substratum of beliefs, assumptions, feelings, quasi-memories, etc." (Figueroa and Swart, 1985) can be brought up into the open. The teacher expecting students to combine affective with cognitive knowledge, needs likewise to be prepared to offer heart as well as head.

In short, the teacher is an essential element within her or his own pedagogical framework. To help create trust leading to self-esteem, tolerance leading to open-mindedness and collaboration leading to a respect for equality, the teacher has to practice all those qualities.

Of the pedagogical skills outlined here most are not specific to anti-racist teaching but a reflection of a broadly liberal approach to education. However, in relation to anti-racist teaching there is also the question of the teacher's own level of awareness about racism. A teacher who perceives racism only at the obvious personal or behavioural level will not be able to take students very far. A teacher who has not begun to examine how living in a society culturally seeped in racism for centuries has infiltrated their own substratum of beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and values, will not be in a position to help students engage in that difficult and often uncomfortable task. A teacher who has not begun to examine how racism is Hall's "structured absence", (1985) as well as how it is deeply embedded within the structures and institutions of our society, will not be in a position to help students uncover these realities.

Apart from the question of awareness in relation to the content of anti-racist teaching, there are also a range of issues which teachers need to consider carefully, for example responses to racist language and behaviour. Although the pedagogical framework may be one based on trust, tolerance and collaboration, there needs to be recognition of the wider framework of the entitlement of all to equal treatment and that racist abuse constitutes illegal discrimination. Teachers, and indeed schools, need to be very clear about policies and procedures for response and these need to be made explicit to students.

While teachers needs to be extremely clear on the latter, regardless of whether they are teaching about racism, it is

difficult to specify just what level of awareness a teacher should have reached before beginning to engage students directly in the issues. However desirable it is that teachers should have undergone their own process of awareness-raising in advance, it is unrealistic to think this represents the reality of teaching. One cannot assume that the majority of white English teachers reading Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry with their students will necessarily have read much else by black writers themselves and thought in any depth about a black perspective or, as the project teacher acknowledged prior to the project, about racism. How many teachers would, like the project teacher and students, similarly feel the Logans were being somewhat unfair to Jeremy by not equally reciprocating his efforts at friendship? How many might feel that Joseph in Waiting for the Rain was not being fair to the white liberal family who helped pay for his education? In other words, how many would be using the criterion of 'balance' without understanding the fundamental imbalance of power between white and black in each situation?

In being faced with such questions, for some people there may only be a fine line between acknowledging one's lack of understanding and a demoralising sense of inadequacy which can lead to white teachers feeling they are not capable of teaching works by black writers. It is not my intention to suggest the latter, but to point to the need for white teachers to engage in the process of extending their own reading at an adult level and to acknowledge themselves as co-learners in the process of reperception. Sharing the interest and stimulation of opening themselves out to the voices of black writers and new perspectives is probably the most valuable quality they could pass on to their students.

I have to admit that in setting up the project, although I realised I could not count on finding a teacher whose own awareness of racism and its ramifications was particularly advanced, I had expected that anyone volunteering to take on

the project would basically be interested in furthering their understanding of racism. I had hoped that through a collaborative networking of researcher and teacher as well as teacher and students that there would have been an exciting sharing of learning. Instead, the project teacher who had begun the course with enthusiasm ended with what appeared a very defensive attitude, with the students receiving increasingly mixed signals from him. Sheer fatigue from pressure of work in school must be seen as a factor in this change - inevitably increasing as the year progressed towards the examination period - but was clearly not an adequate explanation. Stredder not only points to the need in qualitative educational research for "a compatible and open working relationship" (1978: 50) between teacher and researcher, but also suggests this can best be achieved by joint involvement and responsibility for what happens in the classroom. This reduces the possibility of the researcher being in the position of the outsider critic. For this to work, teacher and researcher would obviously need to agree on the same pedagogical framework, that is to have a compatible approach in the first place. In other words, Stredder's argument is circular. While I believe she is correct about the kind of open relationship needed between researcher and teacher and that ideally both should be able to share each other's role, there are still fundamental problems for collaborative research in this area. Grugeon and Woods (1990) suggest a 'participatory democratic' model in which the researcher amongst other roles acts as "critical friend" (1990: 8). However, to what extent does the researcher have to modify any critique because of the sensitivities of the teacher? If the researcher and teacher have not been able to establish a joint understanding of racism in some depth in addition to their relationship of trust, the teacher is likely to feel personally vulnerable at commentary which suggests she or he is reinforcing racism rather than challenging it.

The school context

The collaborative, supportive context which I have outlined as prerequisite for challenging racism in the classroom clearly needs to be reflected in the school as a whole. Addressing inequality needs to be an ongoing, long-term commitment which is integral to the curriculum both formal and informal. While in St Benedict's there was firm commitment in principle from some members of senior management to the written statement of school philosophy referring to "racism or any other form of social division" as "totally unacceptable" (Chapter 5: 117), there appeared to be no structured mechanism whereby the implications of this statement could be addressed in its many aspects throughout the school. The Headteacher expressed the hope that my project would act as a catalyst and that a recognition of the need to face up to racism would grow organically amongst staff. He was extremely wary of any imposition of ideas which he felt staff would immediately reject because they were seen to come 'from above'. Thus while I was given the individual freedom to set up the project in St Benedict's, whether staff responded to the idea of dealing with racism in their own areas was also a matter of individual freedom. It was not surprising, therefore, that without the creation of collaborative structures to promote change, there appeared to be very limited individual interest or motivation in considering the issues. To a staffroom visitor like myself, staff appeared firmly embedded within their own subject disciplines and separate hierarchies with little evidence of cross-curricular links. Even within the English department I gathered a strong sense of it being primarily a collection of individuals. The fact that English and Humanities staff who questioned the banding of students had not been able to effect change on that fundamental social division (directly counter to the stated school philosophy), did not auger well for effecting change in relation to dealing with racism. While St Benedict's could not be described as having "a single-minded concern with academic performance so that student is pitted against student in a competitive arena" (King, 1986: 334) -

with its system of individual profiling and the recognition of a broad range of competencies through 'Records of Achievement' - nevertheless the maintenance of a banding structure would have affected the students' perceptions of themselves and others at a fundamental level by reinforcing concepts of ranking. The connection King (1986) draws between collaborative learning frameworks and prejudice reduction has far-reaching implications throughout a school.

Senior management were reluctant to commit in-service time to a multicultural/anti-racist agenda unless it was in response to staff requests. Quite genuinely they feared that without initial staff interest, any in-service work would provoke resistance and prove counter-productive. With continually increasing pressure on teachers within schools at a time of unprecedented educational change, senior staff stated that it was crucial to give priority to teachers' perceived curriculum needs. Since the common conception of racism is to do with personal hostility, and since there was little overt evidence of this in St Benedict's, with its few black students appearing to all intents 'well integrated' (Gaine, 1987: 11) into a generally harmonious environment, it seemed unlikely that teachers would indeed perceive a need for a multicultural/anti-racist focus. This was confirmed for me by the lack of response at the Heads of Year and Heads of Department meetings where I outlined the project. The notion that prejudice and racism would normally be dealt with in Religious Education, as overtly expressed in the final week by the project teacher, appeared widely held.

Given the lack of any open forum where these issues were aired, I can only surmise that few teachers recognised that if ideas of social justice are to become real in the lives of the students, they need to be woven not only into the whole curriculum but into all aspects of school life. However, a significant factor in the teachers' perceptions has to be their own sense of themselves in relation to issues of

equality and justice. With the establishment of increasingly centralised political control over education by the Conservative right, teachers were subjected in the 1980s to a steady process of social devaluation, culminating in the loss of their negotiating rights with the 1987 Pay and Conditions Act and the 1988 Education Reform Act (Jones, 1989). Ideas of equality and justice cannot be adequately addressed in classrooms alone. They need to pervade the corridors leading to all corners of the school including the staffroom, senior management offices, canteen and kitchens. Indeed they need to extend outside the school gates, through school governors, parents and students into the 70,000 hours of a child's life beyond the 15,000 hours spent in school (Heath and Clifford, 1980).

Final thoughts

With the imposition of the National Curriculum, teachers committed to education as opposed to training will have to find new ways of struggling against a frequently nationalistic (Richardson, 1989) strait-jacket. While English teachers are fortunate not to have a content-prescriptive curriculum and to have features in the English document which can be used to positive advantage, one should nevertheless recall Jones' critique about the recommendation of progressive methodology cut off from its original "radical, social and cultural commitments" (1990a). It is essential we retain the sense of education as a means of 'opening out' and liberation and resist the essential segmentation of 'knowledge' into separate subjects, profile components and attainment targets. Writing of the need to address the structural inequalities of race, class and gender, Taylor (1984) uses the metaphor of an old-fashioned cupboard in her head with three doors. We have to learn how to keep open the three doors simultaneously so we remain aware of the inter-connections of their contents:

"What is an appropriate pedagogy through which to convey the values of equality for each individual? Responsibility needs to be given to pupils for their own learning, power restored to individuals, teacher mediation used to ensure equality of learning time and

facilitation. Means need to be created for girls to practise as leaders, as organisers, as sources of valuable insights, for boys to practise as listeners, supporters, facilitators or discussion and social cohesion. Sexual harassment must be taken as seriously as racial harassment, sexist language be acknowledged as being as offensive as racist language. The structures of the school must support the learning in the classrooms, which means that in formulating policy it is essential collectively to create democratic management arrangements, open means of consultation, a means for pupils' and the community's, as well as the teachers' voices to be heard. The structures of the school must make more explicit the meanings of equality, of sharing, of considerations for diverse views, that the classroom experience should be helping the pupils to formulate. The doors in the pupils' minds, teachers' minds, the doors of the classroom, and of the school, should stand open, always."

While I believe this model of open doors, with its 'the medium is the message' approach, is the surest way forward, the difficulties of addressing racism in a predominantly white area cannot be underestimated. The less diversity in the community, the greater will be the sense of an implicitly white heritage which the school is expected to transmit. The school has to be very clear and explicit about the moral framework within which it is operating its policy of open doors. It cannot be a policy which legitimises the free flow of racist ideology. This poses difficult questions in relation to a model of participatory democracy. For instance, how can one ensure that encouraging the free expression of views from the community, including inevitably racist views, does not become collusion? Church schools have a distinct advantage here over non-denominational schools in that there is already an inbuilt moral code to which parents, students and staff ostensibly subscribe. The problem in these circumstances is how to get beneath this apparent surface consensus to what people really think and feel and to create an atmosphere which will support people examining their own contradictions.

Placed in the wider school and social context, the one-year literature-based project at St Benedict's provided a very

limited means of effecting change. Like Treacher's work on teaching for equality through literature (1983), the course was over-ambitious in attempting to develop critical thinking about society within the isolated confines of a single curriculum area and a limited space of time. It took place largely behind the closed doors of the project teacher's class. Even within the English department no collaborative structures were established to share what was happening or indeed even to make a collection for future use of the supplementary resources such as videos, taped author interviews and other background material.

Nevertheless the project has been a door to further learning. Firstly it raises many questions both for myself and I hope for others who read about the research. Secondly, I am hopeful that it has at least introduced some students to new areas of thought and feeling, which perhaps some of them will one day pursue. Thirdly, but certainly not last in importance, while the project may already simply be a vague memory for the school, one small door has been opened at an institutional level in that the books used on the project are now part of the regular stock in the English department. There will be other young readers who, for instance, will be affected by the power of Mildred Taylor's tale of black experience and make some connection with it, as did a number of the project students. As with any educational experience, what they will do with their newly aroused feelings and knowledge is uncertain, but at least they will have been opened to new voices. That, at an individual level, is a small beginning.

APPENDIX 1.1

PROJECT LITERATURE COURSE

CORE NOVELS:

- Hinton, Nigel. (1983) Buddy, London: New Windmill Series, Heinemann Educational Books.
- Richter, Hans Peter. (1978) Friedrich, London: New Windmill Series, Heinemann Educational Books (first German publication 1961).
- Taylor, Mildred, D. (1987) Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, London: New Windmill Series, Heinemann Educational Books (first American publication 1976).
- Gordon, Sheila. (1987) Waiting For The Rain, London: Orchard Books.

Resources/ activities accompanying Buddy:

RESPONSE SHEETS AND FOCUSED WRITING:

- extract on racist 'joke' incident (Ch 2, Appendix 5.1)
- extract on Buddy-father relationship (Ch 8, Appendix 5.2)
- extract on Buddy-mother relationship (Ch 14, Appendix 5.3)
- extract on arrest of Buddy's father (Ch 19, Appendix 5.4)
- expectations of Charmian (before Millie Murray's visit)
- 'I Wish' (Appendix 5.5) first and second responses

POETRY:

- extract from James Berry's 'Dreaming Black Boy' (in Berry, 1988) re-titled 'I Wish' - responses before and after listening to taped interview with the poet (Appendix 5.5)
- 'The Row' by Linda Whitehead (Appendix 5.7)

DRAMA THEMES:

- victims of 'jokes'
- child/adult conflict (linked to poem 'The Row')

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- students hotseating each other as characters from Buddy
- hotseating of Millie Murray as Charmian and Mrs Rybeero, followed by drama workshop

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES:

- racist 'joke' incident in Buddy
- responses to 'I Wish' (before knowing poet was black)
- own 'I Wish' poems
- Millie Murray's session

Resources/ activities accompanying Friedrich:

RESPONSE SHEETS AND FOCUSED WRITING:

- 1938 Sunday Express editorial (Appendix 6.4)
- character sheet
- extract from chapter 'Grandfather' (Appendix 6.1)
- extract from chapter 'The Way to School' (Appendix 6.2)
- extract from chapter 'The Rabbi' (Appendix 6.3)
- 'Time for Judgement' sheet (Appendix 6.5), following drama role play of 'In the Shelter' and hotseating

BACKGROUND MATERIAL:

- Map of Europe marking concentration camps
- Chronology sheet of anti-semitic legislation and action (reproduced from the book)

POETRY:

- 'Riot Area' by J.H.Chaplin (in Hidden and Hollins, 1978) (Appendix 6.7)
- 'The Experiment' by Laurence Lerner (in Hidden and Hollins, 1978) (Appendix 6.8)
- 'First They Came For The Jews' by Pastor Niemoeller (Appendix 6.6)

DRAMA THEMES:

- intolerance: 'Boat People' role play
- intolerance: 'Jezreels' role play
- Richard Finch workshops: 'the outsider' and 'survival'
- reworking of 'In the Shelter' chapter from Friedrich plus hotseating

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- viewing Friedrich (The English Programme, 1984)
- viewing Through Our Eyes: Children Witness the Holocaust (Tatelbaum, 1985) and Just A Diary (Anne Frank Centre, 1985)
- Kristallnacht 50th anniversary commemoration with visitors Dr and Mrs Engels
- Anne Frank exhibition
- discussion with Brother Michael of sheet 'What are the roots of this?' (Appendix 6.9)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES:

- responses to 'The Experiment'
- responses to chapter 'The Rabbi'

PERSONAL TAPES:

- 'What a young person today thinks about the Holocaust' (Appendix 6.6)

Resources/activities accompanying Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry:

RESPONSE SHEETS AND FOCUSED WRITING:

- character sheet (see English Centre, 1984)
- racism and resistance chart (see English Centre, 1984)
- extract from Ch 3 on the bus incident (Appendix 7.1)
- extract from Ch 6, Mama explaining about slavery (Appendix 7.2)
- script on 'The Burning' (Appendix 7.3)
- Jeremy/Cassie thought-tracking
- Millie Murray's writing workshop

BACKGROUND MATERIAL:

- Background book on Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (The English Centre, 1984)

POETRY:

- 'Mother to Son' by Langston Hughes (in Hughes, 1986) (Appendix 7.4)
- 'Limbo' by Edward Brathwaite (in Hidden and Hollins, 1978) (Appendix 7.5)
- 'Limbo' by John Agard (Agard, 1983) (Appendix 7.5)

DRAMA THEMES:

- own experiences of injustice plus hotseating
- adult/child and sibling power relationships
- masters/ slaves role-play plus hotseating
- friendly 'OK'/ 'snob' school role-play

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- viewing Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (The English Programme, 1989)
- student hotseating session
- hotseating Millie Murray as Cassie, Mama and Big Ma plus writing workshop

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES:

- exchange of character assessments
- responses to revenge by grounding the bus (Ch 3); and the fight between T.J. and Stacey (Ch 4)

PERSONAL TAPES:

- responses to critiques in English Centre background book

Resources/ activities accompanying Waiting For The Rain:

RESPONSE SHEETS AND FOCUSED WRITING:

- classification question sheet (Appendix 8.2)
- extract from Ch 4: thought-tracking Joseph (Appendix 9.4)
- extract from Ch 5: thought-tracking Tengo (Appendix 9.5)
- deconstructing two versions of S.A. history (Appendices 9.1; 9.2)
- extract from Ch 14: advice to Tengo (Appendix 9.6)
- notes on Girls Apart video
- notes on Sheila Gordon interview

DRAMA THEMES:

- 'OK' / 'snob' school role-play continued

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- science session on 'race' classification
- reading Journey to Jo'burg (Naidoo, 1985)
- viewing schools' documentary South Africa (BBC Scene, 1988)
- viewing Girls Apart (Sheppard and Sauvageot, 1987)
- listening to taped interview with author Sheila Gordon
- self-selected group corresponding by tape with Emily, a South African exile (Appendix 9.3)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES:

- responses to Journey to Jo'burg
- responses to 'What is 'race'?' sheet (Appendix 8.1)
- responses to Girls Apart video

Resources/ activities for British experience unit leading to Media Week:

RESPONSE SHEETS AND FOCUSED WRITING:

- responses to programme on racism in the community
- 'Moving Home': own family's migration (Appendix 11.1)
- Facts and myths of immigration (Appendix 11.2)
- response to full version of James Berry's 'Dreaming Black Boy' (Appendix 5.6)
- notes on racism in children's books/curriculum video

TV SERIES:

- Getting to Grips with Racism (BBC, 1988)

SHORT STORY:

- 'K B W' by Farrukh Dhondy (1976)

POETRY:

- Drum, Talk and Dub (English Programme, 1986): Caribbean-British poets with James Berry
- selection from When I Dance by James Berry (1988)
- performance/workshop by James Berry

DRAMA THEMES:

- migration from the Caribbean (accompanied by exhibition)

APPENDIX 1.2

PROJECT LOAN COLLECTION AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

- Abells, Chana Byers. (1987) The Children We Remember, Julia MacRae Books.
- Ajegbo, Keith. (1982) Black Lives, White Worlds, C.U.P.
- Benson, Mary. (1986) Nelson Mandela, Hamish Hamilton.
- Casey, Maud. (1987) Over The Water, The Women's Press.
- Darke, Marjorie. (1983) Comeback, Puffin Plus.
- Darke, Marjorie. (1985) The First of Midnight, Puffin.
- Fitzhugh, Louise. (1978) Nobody's Family Is Going To Change, Fontana.
- Frank, Anne. (1960) The Diary of Anne Frank, Hutchinson .
- Anne Frank Foundation. (1985) Anne Frank in the World, Anne Frank Foundation.
- Gies, Miep. (1988) Anne Frank Remembered, Corgi.
- Greene, Bette. (1979) Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe, Puffin.
- Greene, Bette. (1987) Get on Out of Here, Philip Hall, Puffin.
- Guy, Rosa. (1977) The Friends, Puffin.
- Guy, Rosa. (1985) Edith Jackson, Puffin.
- Guy, Rosa. (1985) The Disappearance, Puffin.
- Guy, Rosa. (1987) And I Heard A Bird Sing, Victor Gollancz.
- Guy, Rosa. (1986) Paris, Pee Wee and Big Dog, Puffin.
- Hamilton, Virginia. (1982) Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush, Walker Books.
- Hamilton, Virginia. (1975) M C Higgins The Great, Hamish Hamilton.
- Hamilton, Virginia. (1987) The Planet of Junior Brown, Victor Gollancz.
- Holman, Felice. (1984) Slake's Limbo, Fontana.
- Kaye, Geraldine. (1987) A Breath of Fresh Air, Andre Deutsch.
- Kerr, Judith. (1974) When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit, Fontana.
- Kerr, Judith. (1975) The Other Way Round, Collins.
- Koehn, Ilse. (1981) Mischling, Second Degree, Puffin Plus.
- Lester, Julius. (1973) To Be A Slave, Puffin.
- Lester, Julius. (1977) Long Journey Home, Puffin.
- Lingard, Joan. (1980) The File on Fraulein Berg, Julia MacRae.
- Maruki, Toshi. (1983) The Hiroshima Story, A & C Black.
- Murray, Millie. (1988) Kiesha, The Women's Press.
- Naidoo, Beverley. (1989) Chain of Fire, Collins.
- Reiss, Joanna. (1979) The Upstairs Room, Puffin.
- Rhue, Morton. (1982) The Wave, Puffin Plus.
- Richter, Hans Peter. (1987) I Was There, Puffin.
- Smith, Rukshana. (1983) Rainbows of the Gutter, Bodley Head.
- Swindells, Robert. (1984) Brother in the Land, O.U.P.
- Taylor, Mildred. (1984) Let The Circle Be Unbroken, Puffin Plus.
- Watson, James. (1985) Talking In Whispers, Fontana.
- Watson, James. (1986) The Freedom Tree, Fontana.
- *****

These books were provided by the Schools Library Service.
22 students (11 girls, 11 boys) borrowed from the collection:
11 students (1 book), 5 students (2 books), 6 students (3 or more books).

APPENDIX 1.3

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

- May-July '87 Initial discussions about research idea with members of University Faculty of Education, LEA Senior Adviser and Head of English (Paul Brennan) at St Benedict's.
- Sept-Dec '87 Research proposal submitted to/accepted by University. Seminars attended on reader-response (until March '88). Informal meetings over dinner with Paul Brennan and Advisers.
- Dec '87 Search for funding initiated (13 organisations approached). Project accepted by Head and Chair of Governors at St Benedict's at meeting including Head of English and English Adviser. Meeting with Chief Adviser re. possible LEA support. Beginning of regular meetings with University supervisor.
- Jan '88 Paul Brennan applying for Deputy Headships. Introduced informally by Paul to Alan Parsons, Head of Drama. Formal meeting to put forward project to school's English Department. Head and Senior Teacher (Gerald Carey) begin DES sponsored 20-day Multicultural Course.
- Feb-Mar '88 Devising survey of Racist Perceptions. Meeting to plot way forward at St Benedict's of 8 staff involved with World Studies or Multicultural courses - including Head, Gerald Carey, Paul Brennan, Alan Parsons and Head of History. Two positive responses to funding applications.
- Apr '88 Survey piloted. Informal dinner meeting with Paul Brennan and Alan Parsons.
- May-June '88 Paul Brennan to leave St Benedict's at end of term but continuing to help develop network for project e.g. informal dinner meetings with Alan and with Elly Williams (English/drama teacher to join department in new term). Series of evening drama workshops by Alan and colleague. Visit to school by British Council of Churches (BCC) Race Relations Unit administrator re. funding application. Revising survey.

July '88	First Racist Perceptions Survey¹ carried out by colleague for all second year students (Y8). Offered .6 LEA Curriculum Support Teacher post (English and Drama) with time allocated to project for school year beginning September 1988. Preparations in hand for purchase of tape recorders (English Advisory Service), books (school's English Department) etc. Initial rejection by BCC of funding application but setting up of Management (Steering) Group with black community links suggested prior to re-application.
20 July '88	Interviews with RE and English teachers for project class over past year.
25 July '88	Pre-project interview with Headteacher Brother Michael.
Aug '88	Initial meetings with artists Richard Finch and Olusola Oyeleye. Offer of help with transcription from post-graduate student. Couple of meetings with Alan Parsons. Interview with Sheila Gordon (author of <u>Waiting for the Rain</u>) recorded for later use on project.
5 Sept '88	Pre-project interview with Alan Parsons.
Sept-Oct '88	Students reading <u>Buddy</u> . 6 weekend meetings with Alan Parsons. Pamela Jones (previously second in department) Acting Head of English.
24/26 Sept '88	Interview with James Berry about 'Dreaming Black Boy'; played to students after their first response to edited version 'I Wish'.
20 Oct '88	Hotseating and drama workshop with Millie Murray (planning meeting over dinner previous evening with Alan and Millie).
Nov-Dec '88	Students reading <u>Friedrich</u> . 3 review/planning meetings with Alan. BCC Race Relations Unit funding approved for transcription and other costs.
10 Nov '88	Talk by Dr and Mrs Engel to class - commemoration of 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht.
6 Dec '88	Drama workshop with Richard Finch.

¹ Items printed in bold type refer to the student-related activities and details integral to the project course itself.

8 Dec '88 Dr and Mrs Engels invited to talk to 6th form. English Adviser and his team briefed by me on progress of project.

9 Dec '88 Headteacher Brother Michael's session with class ('What are the roots of this?' sheet).

12/13 Dec '88 Interviews with girls in project class.

21 Dec '88 Book of 'Poems and Prayers for Dr and Mrs Engel' completed.

8 Jan '89 Progress interview with Alan Parsons.

11 Jan '89 Visit by English Adviser to talk to Alan and see examples of work.

Jan-Mar '89 Alan Parsons appointed Acting Head of English (until July). Alan also occupied in setting up school anti-smoking campaign and rehearsing his own stage version of Friedrich with GCSE drama students. Project students reading Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. 4 review/planning meetings during term with Alan (including interview). Brief address to English Departmental meeting on project. Interviews with some of the project boys.

6 Feb '89 Visit by Dr Figueroa (research supervisor) to school - meeting with Head and Senior Teacher followed by viewing lesson (class hotseating session).

27 Feb '89 Drama workshop with Richard Finch at Drama Centre plus visit to Anne Frank exhibition.

2 Mar '89 Head of Department interviews (Having applied previously, Alan Parsons did not re-apply). Catholic male teacher from outside county appointed for following September.

3 Mar '89 Hotseating and writing workshop with Millie Murray. (Session also with Elly Williams' Year 9 class)

6 Mar '89 School inset day. Asked to lead session on cultural diversity (joined by Madeleine Lake - Curriculum Support teacher, S.W. Herts Language Centre).

First meeting of Steering Group.

14 Mar '89 Heads of Year meeting addressed.

16 Mar '89 Meeting with Drama Advisory Teacher re. final drama week (with Olusola Oyeleye).

4 Apr '89	Science session on 'race' classification with Mike Vance and John Siraj-Blatchford (recorded in my absence).
6 Apr '89	Silent reading of <u>Journey to Jo'burg</u> (in my absence).
Apr-May '89	Students reading <u>Waiting for the Rain</u> . 2 review/ planning meetings with Alan.
23 Apr '89	Meeting with Olusola to plan drama week.
May-June '89	Five weekly RE sessions with Gerald Carey viewing <u>Getting to Grips with Racism</u> , ending on 20 June with discussion relating to my role and evaluation.
2 June '89	Second planning meeting with Olusola re. 'Media Week'.
6 June '89	Heads of Department meeting addressed.
9 June '89	Visit by James Berry (session with project students and one with 6th form).
12 June '89	Second Steering Group meeting.
15 June '89	Class reading Farrukh Dhondhy's 'K B W'.
2 July '89	Evening meeting prior to Media Week with Alan, Olusola and Gillian Klein.
3-7 July '89	Media Week with Olusola Oyeleye and other visitors.
11 July '89	Evaluation sessions (one with Chris Gaine).
11 Sept '89	Final meeting of some members of Steering Group with Chris Gaine.
23 Nov '89	Re-administration of Racist Perceptions Survey by two colleagues from outside school.

APPENDIX 2.1

OPINION SURVEY

We all hold views about ourselves and others which help make up the picture we have of our world. In completing the survey below please express YOUR OWN VIEWS AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE. Your name will not be attached to this paper.

A.

1. Have you ever been abroad?....
2. If you have, why did you go and to which countries?
3. What did you like or dislike most about being there?

B. WRITE AS MUCH AND AS FREELY AS YOU WISH ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

1. When I think of myself I think...
2. When I think of English people I think...
3. When I think of Irish people I think...

4. When I think of Asian people I think....

5. When I think of West Indian people I think...

6. When I think of South Africa I think...

7. My experience of people of another colour from my own is....

C. READ EACH STATEMENT BELOW AND PUT A CIRCLE AROUND THE LETTERS THAT BEST SHOW HOW YOU FEEL:

- SA - Strongly Agree
- A - Agree
- U - Undecided
- D - Disagree
- SD - Strongly Disagree

	AGREE		-	DISAGREE		
1. It would be good if our school had more black students.	SA	A	U	D	SD	
2. Irish people are just as intelligent as English people.	SA	A	U	D	SD	
3. West Indians have a good sense of rhythm.	SA	A	U	D	SD	
4. Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun.	SA	A	U	D	SD	
5. The slogan 'Keep Britain White' is really quite sensible.	SA	A	U	D	SD	
6. Television shouldn't show films where black people are made to look like savages.	SA	A	U	D	SD	
7. There isn't racism in our area	SA	A	U	D	SD	

	AGREE		-	DISAGREE	
8. It's harder for black people to get houses in Britain than for white people.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9. Immigration is making Britain overcrowded.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. A black child born in Britain should have the same rights as a white child.	SA	A	U	D	SD
11. I wouldn't like a family of another colour to move next door.	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. Black people in Britain have as much right to getting jobs as white people.	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. People who come to Britain should behave like the British.	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. It's good to see black and white people marrying each other.	SA	A	U	D	SD
15. We need to do something in school about racist attitudes.	SA	A	U	D	SD
16. Words like <i>paki</i> , <i>wog</i> , <i>chink</i> , <i>gippo</i> are harmless really.	SA	A	U	D	SD

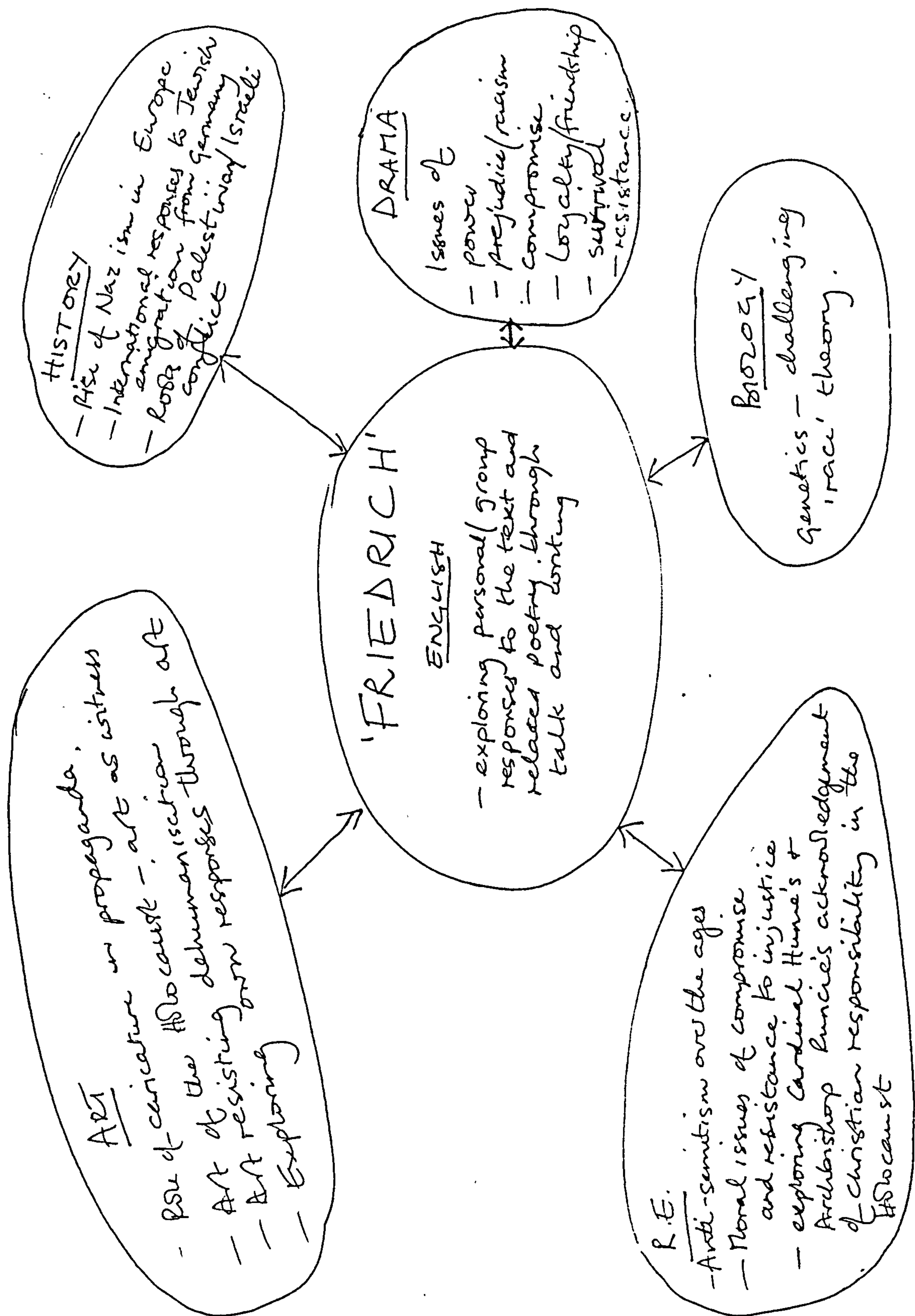
D. ABOUT YOURSELF! CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER.

1. Have you ever had any contact with someone of another colour from your own?	YES	DON'T RECALL	NO	
2. Have you ever had a good friend of another colour from your own?	YES	DON'T RECALL	NO	
3. Has any member of your family ever had a good friend of another colour from his or her own?	YES	DON'T RECALL	NO	
4. Have you ever visited the home of someone of another colour from your own?	YES	DON'T RECALL	NO	
5. Has someone of another colour from your own ever come to your house for a meal or to play?	YES	DON'T RECALL	NO	
6. Are you male/female?	MALE	FEMALE		
7. What is your age?			

YOUR COMMENTS ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

What did you feel, or think, while answering this questionnaire?
Please feel free to make your own comments.

1	It would be good if our school had more black students.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	10		
2	Irish people are just as intelligent as English people.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	11		
3	West Indians have a good sense of rhythm.	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	0	2	43
4	Jokes about people from other cultures are just a bit of fun.	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	26
5	The slogan 'Keep Britain White' is really quite sensible.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
6	Television shouldn't show films where black people are made to look like savages.	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
7	There isn't racism in our area	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	10
8	It's harder for black people to get houses in Britain than for white people.	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	13
9	Immigration is making Britain overcrowded.	2	2	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	0	2	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	39
10	A black child born in Britain should have the same rights as a white child.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
11	I wouldn't like a family of another colour to move next door.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
12	Black people in Britain have as much right to getting jobs as white people.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
13	People who come to Britain should behave like the British.	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	23
14	It's good to see black and white people marrying each other.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	10
15	We need to do something in school about racist attitudes.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
16	Words like <i>paki</i> , <i>wog</i> , <i>chink</i> , <i>gippo</i> are harmless really.	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	15
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT TOTALS		7	7	5	3	5	10	8	4	7	9	12	6	16	8	19	7	12	4	4	3	11	10	7	8	8	8	5	3	10	7	233
1st survey score - top left corner		2	6	3	13	5	7	10	4	6	6	10	7	23	6	19	4	10	3	7	3	11	8	4	6	4	11	8	3	18	6	233
2nd survey score - bottom right "		Alison	Andrew	Angela	Carl	Caroline	Dan	Donald	Erica	Gaby	Graham	Greg	Hannah	Ian	Jacky	John	Julia	Justin	Louise	Marco	Marion	Michael	Michelle	Neil	Paul	Peter	Philip	Simon	Tanya	Terry	Tony	





APPENDIX 4.3

NOTES ON GIRLS' INTERVIEWS - DEC 88.

QUESTION: Do you enjoy reading for pleasure? What about other members of family? (plus other questions about relaxation time, life at home, siblings etc.)

All say they enjoy reading for pleasure although they vary in amount of time spent reading. Variations in families, a couple having parents who appear very keen readers.

QUESTION: Do you think boys have more freedom at your age than girls?

Generally felt they were free to go out with boys but varied in opinions about whether boys had more freedom than girls of their age. Some felt parents were justified in being more worried about them than about boys.

QUESTION: Do you think boys get a better deal in school? If so, in what ways?

Varied in responses. Boys got into more trouble than girls but they had a greater choice of sports.

QUESTION: Do you think teachers respond differently to boys and girls?

Felt that some teachers definitely relate better to boys, some giving an example of a male teacher who socially interacts with the boys in class, discussing things like football, while ignoring the girls. Felt teachers often only ask boys to do carrying jobs.

QUESTION: Are there patterns of behaviour you associate more with boys than girls?

Question had to be explained. Felt that boys were more inclined to fool around, to be less concerned about what others thought of them, to be less likely to show inner emotions or to place importance on people's feelings.

QUESTION: Far more boys than girls appear prepared to answer questions in class (about two-thirds of the boys compared to a quarter to a third of the girls). Why do you think this is?

Felt that most of the girls tend to keep quiet not because they haven't responses but because they are worried about how their answers will be received (even though they acknowledge that answers may not necessarily be 'right/wrong' but more opinions); worried that teacher's dismissal of what they said might lead to others in class laughing at them - sensitive not only to teacher's tone of voice, but to his facial expressions. Very aware of teacher's moods and feel they are unpredictable. Only a couple of the girls actually see themselves as confident. Another expressed the view that she was making herself answer more questions even though she wasn't very sure of herself, believing otherwise that she would lose out on her grades. Others took the same view that they needed to try and instil some courage into themselves as they felt they were losing out in getting the experience of speaking out in class discussions. A conflict in the feelings of some of them emerged in that they felt it was good to be able to participate more but were worried about being picked on, even to read for instance, because if they stumbled, they could end up feeling stupid. One girl described how she talks to herself to calm down if called on to read. Nevertheless they were conscious that there tended to be certain people who were called on to be readers. They generally felt that most of the boys coped better with the class situation as they were less concerned about what others thought of them (although they identified a few boys who they felt were more like the girls in their reactions). Also thought the boys were often prepared to say the first thing that came into their minds. It was felt a pattern was now established where the boys naturally answered first. Some had had the experience of having put their hand up but a boy being called on first so they had then put their hand down. Even when Millie came they felt the boys were in first with their questions (some of which they thought were quite silly). A couple of girls who had in fact participated in Millie's hotseating session said they wished other girls had joined in more and not left most of the questioning to the boys.

QUESTION: Are there any lessons where the girls participate more? With women teachers?

Responses were varied about subjects in which they felt they participated more according to personal preferences. However the common feature of these lessons was that they felt more relaxed and less worried about making mistakes and being judged. They didn't express any preferences for women teachers although it emerged that many of them had only one woman teacher.

QUESTION: Do you feel that teachers tend to miss out issues that related directly to you as girls? Would you prefer to discuss some issues in small groups or girls' only groups?

Felt that issues of particular interest to girls were omitted at times. Varied responses about having an opportunity to be in a girls' only group. Some liked the idea in order that they could then see what emerged and exchange views with a boys' only group. Others prefer to have mixed sexes within the small group itself. All enjoyed small group work, feeling it gave them an opportunity to express themselves. A number of girls, however, felt that the boys in their group were silly and that time was thus wasted which they resented, particularly as the boys seemed to dominate handling of the microphone. All would like more small group work.

QUESTION: Do you feel your journal gives you an outlet for expressing yourself? Do you enjoy using it or is it a drudge?

Apart from a qualified response from one person, all said they really enjoyed writing in their journals; that they appreciated the journals as an outlet for expressing their own views without being worried about what other people might think of their views (i.e. appreciated the privacy the journals gave them) or being worried about being marked for punctuation and spelling. They seemed to place a high personal value on them.

QUESTION: Which do you find easier writing - journal responses or essays/stories. Why?

Most said they found journal writing easier than essay writing as there was something definite to respond to. Also said they were worried about whether they were writing correctly when writing essays.

QUESTION: What would you like to do when you leave school? Career? Family? Would you want to work outside your home if you have a family?

Almost all expressed desire for some sort of career when finished school. Although the majority saw marriage somewhere on the horizon, they expressed the wish to do something with their lives first, but if they had children would put them and their families before their careers.

APPENDIX 4.4

TALKING

Write down the person in this class with whom you most like talking:

List up to 6 people of the same sex as you with whom you also like to talk. Try to rank them. Some can be ranked equally if you wish.

List up to 6 people of the opposite sex as you with whom you also like to talk. Try to rank them. Some can be ranked equally if you wish.

Who are you?!

It didn't do him any good, of course. As soon as he started up the stairs to his classroom he felt a tap on his shoulder. It was Mr Normington, 3E's class tutor.

"I told you about those yesterday," Mr Normington said, pointing at his jeans. "You said it was only while your mother was repairing your trousers."

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"She hasn't done them yet," Buddy said, taking care with the 'h' of 'hasn't'.

"Why not?"

For a moment Buddy wanted to tell him, wanted to shout, "Because I haven't seen her for five months — that's why." That would soon shut him up.

"I don't know, sir."

Mr Normington sighed. "It's always you, isn't it? Letting down the standards of the rest of the class."

Mr Normington was always talking about standards. He'd been in the school before it had been reorganized. Standards had been so much higher then. The Express classes had to maintain those standards. The Express classes were the last bastion, not just of academic standards but of dress and

behaviour, too. 'Bastion' was one of Mr Normington's favourite words.

He put his hand on the back of Buddy's neck and squeezed — not hard enough to complain about, but hard enough to show that he could hurt him if he wanted to.

"Upstairs. And no denim tomorrow." Squeeze, squeeze. Push, push. Up the stairs and into the classroom.

Buddy sat down at his desk near the door and noticed that Julius and Charmian weren't in their places behind him. He hoped the twins weren't away. He'd never had black friends before — in fact, he'd said some nasty things to some black kids at his Junior School. But he'd been drawn to Julius and Charmian because they were the only other people who didn't fit in with the rest of the class. He'd started off by admiring the cheerful way they ignored all the spiteful jibes that the other pupils, and even some of the teachers, made. They'd become his allies and then, gradually, his closest friends.

Mr Normington started calling the register. He looked up when there was no answer from Julius and Charmian. "The Rybeero twins not here? Has anyone seen our coloured cousins?"

"I saw them hanging around the fruit shop after school, yesterday," Emma Groves said.

There was a ripple of laughter at this old joke. Fruit shop meant bananas. Bananas meant apes. Apes meant Blacks.

Mr Normington pretended innocence. "Really?" he said. Pause. "I wonder why?"

Another ripple of conspiratorial laughter. Everyone was happy.

Buddy could have said something. Something angry about how the twins were worth all the rest of the class put together. At the very least he could have sat stony-faced as his friends were mocked. But he smiled. Mr Normington was looking in his direction and, in an attempt to show that he belonged in 3E, and that he was on the side of Mr Normington's bastions and standards, Buddy smiled and joined in the general chuckle.

He hated himself for wanting to belong to all that, but it was true — he did. A huge part of him wanted it.

The rest of the day went badly and he was almost glad. It was a punishment for betraying his friends. Two more teachers told him off about his jeans and he got less than half marks in the Biology test. So much for the stupid pavement game. He was still going to die young.

At afternoon registration Mr Normington handed out forms about the Parent's Consultation Evening later that month. Buddy was so busy brooding about the idea of his dad coming to school that he only half-listened as Mr Normington went on about the litter in the classroom.

"Well, who's responsible?" Mr Normington barked in his loudest voice.

Buddy looked up and just happened to catch the teacher's eyes on him.

"It weren't me, sir," he said and then cursed himself for the mistake.

"Wasn't. It wasn't me," Mr Normington sneered. "Well, frankly, I don't care. Since you speak and look like a dustman, you can do a dustman's job. Clear it up."

There was absolute silence in the room as he went round the desks picking up the bits of paper. He didn't look at anyone. A couple of people near the back slyly put their feet on the pieces, making it harder to pick them up. His hands were dirty when he finished.

As he threw the paper into the bin he vowed that one day he would get his revenge.

"But what?" His dad put down his knife and fork and glared at him.

Buddy longed to go on – to ask what the job was, to beg him not to do anything that might send him back to prison – but he didn't.

"I don't get you," his dad said. "First you moan 'cos we ain't got no money, then you moan when I make a bit. You got your trousers, didn't you?"

"I'm not moaning," Buddy mumbled.

They finished their meal in silence and Buddy felt awful. His dad was doing it all for him and he wasn't even grateful. All he did was criticize. Not just about this. It was everything. Things his dad did irritated him – like the noise he made eating and drinking, the unusual clothes he wore, the swaggering way he walked. Why couldn't he be more like other kids' dads?

Yet he didn't always think like that. There were times when he loved the fact that his dad was different. He liked it when he mucked around and he was glad that he wasn't like Mr Normington and people of that sort. It was all so confusing. Sometimes these opposite feelings swirled about inside Buddy's mind until he wished he could open his head like a window and let it all go flying out.

loud with music. Rock 'n Roll fans, lots of them dressed – like his dad – in Teddy Boy clothes, had come from miles away to talk, listen to the music and buy rare records of the fifties. It had been more like a club than a shop and his dad had been really happy.

Then, one night, it had burned down. Everything had been destroyed. Buddy had only been eight at the time but he could still remember the look on his dad's face when he'd heard the news. They'd all rushed round there and stood looking at the gaping, charred hole where the shop had been. During the fire the records had melted. As the plastic had cooled, it had set into a hard, black stream that flowed across the pavement and into the gutter. There, in the middle of the road, a terrible row had started when his mum found out that his dad had never bothered to insure the shop. It must have been the first bad row between them that Buddy had ever heard, because even now it made him shudder.

Oh yes, it would be terrific if his dad could start another shop like that.

Oddly enough, though, this sudden hope for the future made Buddy nervous. It hadn't been long after the shop had burned down that his dad had gone to prison. If only he could be sure that he wasn't doing something that might get him into trouble. The thought nagged him all the rest of the afternoon and while they were having tea Buddy finally plucked up courage to say something.

"Mrs Rybeero told me they need taxi drivers."

"You're too young to drive, big-boots."

"Not me. Don't muck around. I meant you."

"Me? Working for jungle-bunnies? Do us a favour."

"They're not jungle-bunnies," Buddy said, trying to keep his voice calm despite a spasm of anger that went through him.

"Coulda fooled me."

"Anyway, that's not the point. It's a good job."

"I've got a job, ain't I?"

"Yeah, but ..."

In the next shop, Buddy picked out a pair of very ordinary grey trousers and tried them on.

"Bit boring, ain't they?" his dad said when Buddy came out of the changing cubicle. "Why don't you buy some nice drainpipes like these?" he asked, pointing to his own trousers that were so narrow that they kept riding up over his pink socks.

"They're for school, Dad."

"Blimey, my son's a right square," his dad said to the shop assistant. "Now, what else you want?" His dad made him buy a couple of shirts and a sweater. Buddy thought of mentioning the parka – it really was too small – but his dad had spent enough already. After all, how long would this job last? It certainly paid well whatever it was. All sorts of questions about the job still buzzed in his head but he tried to push them away.

They walked along the streets looking at the shops and his dad talked happily about how he would soon be able to get his bike back.

"You never know – might even get another record shop. That'd be a bit of all right, wouldn't it?"

That would be great. Buddy could still remember the tiny shop filled with records. There'd been posters of Elvis and Buddy and other Rock 'n Roll singers and the shop had been

She didn't hate him. He could see it in her eyes. And she'd called him 'her love'.

"I thought you went away because I stole the money from your purse."

She put her hand to her mouth and closed her eyes. She stayed like that, shaking her head, until he began to be worried. He looked round. Nobody was watching. He reached across and touched her other hand. Her fingers gripped him tight.

"Buddy, it's not true. You mustn't ever think it. Promise me. Never think it, never say it. It's not true. Promise me."

"I promise."

She let go of his hand and glanced round the café then edged her chair nearer the table.

"I had to get away, Buddy. Not because of you. Not even just because of your dad. For me, I suppose. It's hard to explain. I still love you, though. Both of you."

Buddy suddenly remembered his dad hiding the photo. They still loved each other. It had all been a mistake. Everything could be all right again.

"Will you come home?" he asked.

"I can't – not just like that."

"Why?"

She shook her head and twisted her cup round and round in the saucer.

"I can't, that's all."

"Do you love someone else?"

"No, no, it's not that. Oh, Buddy – can you understand? I want to come home but at the same time I don't."

She stopped, as if she was sure he couldn't make any sense out of what she was saying, but he could. It was something he knew only too well.

"Lots of times I nearly came back. Last Sunday I went round to the house. I saw you with your dad and all I wanted to do was come in and see you both – talk to you. But I knew it wouldn't be any good. It would all be the same like before. And I can't ... go through all that again. I'm selfish, that's what it is. I want you – but changed, different. Not you. Your dad. Our life. Not all the rows again. We got married too young, had you too young. I missed out on everything. I'm not a very good mum."

"You are. Mum, don't say that – you are." He'd blurted it out too loud and he could see by the way that his mum's eyes flicked round the room that people must be listening. He fought back the tears. He would not cry. He would not.

"Here, I'm going to school now. Well, not school – evening classes. Business Studies. Three evenings a week. Can you imagine me scribbling away at a desk? We learn all about computers and things. I'm a right dunce," she laughed. "I bet you're not."

"If I pass the exams I'm going to get a better job. Same company but more responsibility, better money." She lowered her voice again. "Is your dad working?"

Buddy shook his head – he mustn't tell her about that. "He might get a job driving taxis. They need drivers."

His mum's mouth tried to smile but couldn't.

"Let's go," she said, standing up. He waited at the door while she went to the counter and paid.

They walked back slowly and she told him about the flat she shared with a lady from her office. He only half listened because he was going over and over in his mind what he wanted to say.

"I've written the address," she said, stopping and fumbling with her bag. She handed him a piece of paper. "If you want, you can come round and see me – any time. Buddy, you mustn't hate me for what I've done."

"I don't. I love you."

She bit her lip and fumbled with her bag again.

"Look, I won't come any further. Here's some money. No, please take it. Buddy, please."

He took the money and bundled it into his pocket with her address. Now. He had to say it now, before she went. It burst out of him – all in the wrong order.

"Dad loves you. He's going to save up and buy a shop again. He's going to get a job. He looks at your photo. Honest, I know he loves you. He wants you to come home. So do I." His voice was trembling and the breath was bursting his lungs.

"I can't. Not yet. I'll think about it. I promise." She walked away a couple of steps then stopped. "Come and see me. Don't say anything to your dad. Just give me time. Buddy?"

He nodded and she went, turning once to wave before she disappeared round the corner.

He walked slowly, but speeded up as the thought struck him – she only wanted a bit of time to think. He started to trot. She was going to think it over. And if he could prove that his dad had changed, she'd come back. That was obvious. She still loved them. He was running now, the wind making his eyes water and his throat raw with the cold. Somehow or other he'd make his dad get a proper job – driving a taxi, anything. And when his mum saw how things had changed, she would come back. She would.

Buddy stepped out on to the pavement. His dad glanced up and, even in the dim light, the shock showed on his face.

"What the 'ell are you doing 'ere?"

"Why aren't you with Mum?" Buddy's voice was hoarse and he cleared his throat painfully.

"You 'ad no right to do that, Buddy."

"What happened?"

"What d'you think 'appened?"

"Did she go?"

"Course she went. You 'ad no right."

Buddy saw it all. Saw them standing awkwardly in the hall. They probably hadn't even got as far as the front room. It was his fault, but he hated them. Both of them. He might have guessed that his dad would freeze up and not say anything — he always did. And his mum, she could be so sarcastic when she wanted to. He remembered the way his heart had shrivelled when she'd said "Great!" and just walked away. In a mood like that, she was bound to have said something horrible. And the row would have started. Just like before. Just like always. He hated them. They would never get back together.

"I told the police," he said suddenly and then repeated it slowly, wanting every word to hurt his dad as much as possible.

His dad looked at him, puzzled, then his eyes grew wide as it sank in. He glanced over Buddy's shoulder, then he turned slowly and looked back along the road in the other direction.

"When?" he said. Buddy had expected anger, expected even to be hit, but the slow movements and the gentleness of his dad's voice threw him.

"Ten minutes ago."

His dad turned back and looked directly at him.

"He made you do it," Buddy said. "I wanted the cops to get him so you could stop."

His dad spun round and dashed towards the gate of 56.

.... A moment later a policeman stepped out from the gateway. He was carrying the briefcase that had the jewellery in it. He got into the front of the car, leaving the door open. Buddy saw him speak and heard the tinny reply of the radio. Then his dad came out of the gate, followed by the Beast and another policeman. His dad went straight to the car, opened the back door, and got in. He slid along the seat to allow the Beast in. The policeman closed the door behind them, then walked round the car and got into the front seat.

The driver was still talking into the microphone and his door was open, so the inside light was on. Buddy could see his dad clearly. He lay back against the seat and closed his eyes. Then the Beast leaned forward and put his head in his hands as if he were crying. His dad sat up and put his arm round the Beast's shoulder.

The front door slammed. The light went off. The engine purred into life, and, as silently as it had arrived, the car drew away.

Buddy ran after him and grabbed his arm.

"He's not there. He's gone. I saw him go into the pub."

"Des King?"

Buddy nodded.

"What about Ralph?"

Ralph? Was there someone else? Charmian hadn't said anything about anyone else. Then it hit him — Ralph James Campbell. The Beast. In Buddy's plan, the Beast had hardly counted as a real person at all. He hadn't actually wanted him to get into trouble, like Mr King, but he hadn't seemed important enough to worry about. One look at his dad's face changed that — to him, the Beast was a man called Ralph, a man who mattered.

"Was Ralph with Des?" his dad shouted and he grabbed hold of him and shook him. Buddy was glad. He wanted his dad to shake and shake him until he fell to pieces but his bandaged hands were still weak and they slipped off Buddy's arms.

"Was he?" his dad shouted.

"No."

His dad ran towards the house then turned and yelled, "Go. Now. Get away."

APPENDIX 5.5 (ADAPTATION OF 'DREAMING BLACK BOY')

I WISH.....

I wish my teacher's eyes wouldn't
go past me today. Wish he'd know
it's okay to hug me when I kick
a goal. Wish I myself wouldn't
hold back when an answer comes.

I wish I could be educated
to the best of tune-up, and earn
good money and not sink to lick
boots. I wish I could go on every
crisscross way of the globe
and no person or powers or
hotel keepers would make it a waste.

I wish life wouldn't spend me out
opposing. Wish same way creation
would have me stand it would have
me stretch, and hold high, my voice
Paul Robeson's, my inside eye
a sun. Nobody wants to say
hello to nasty answers.

by James Berry.

Dreaming Black Boy

I wish my teacher's eyes wouldn't
go past me today. Wish he'd know
it's okay to hug me when I kick
a goal. Wish I myself wouldn't
hold back when an answer comes.
I'm no woodchopper now
like all ancestors.

I wish I could be educated
to the best of tune up, and earn
good money and not sink to lick
boots. I wish I could go on every
crisscross way of the globe
and no persons or powers or
hotel keepers would make it a waste.

I wish life wouldn't spend me out
opposing. Wish same way creation
would have me stand it would have
me stretch, and hold high, my voice
Paul Robeson's, my inside eye
a sun. Nobody wants to say
hello to nasty answers.

I wish torch throwers of night
would burn lights for decent times.
Wish plotters in pyjamas would pray
for themselves. Wish people wouldn't
talk as if I dropped from Mars.

I wish only boys were scared
behind bravados, for I could suffer.
I could suffer a big big lot.
I wish nobody would want to earn
the terrible burden I can suffer.

James Berry

The Row

Linda Whitehead (aged 14)

(a daughter to her mother)

I've explained it all to her,
But she still can't see sense.
So I explain it again
And again
And again.
She still says I'm wrong
– Raises her voice a little.
I raise mine louder
And louder
And louder.
She says things.
I say things too,
Then rush off in a huff,
Sorry there had to be a row
But not sorry for what I'd said.

APPENDIX 5.8

20.9.88. CLASS DISCUSSION AFTER READING CHAPTER 5 OF BUDDY AND WRITING IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IN JOURNAL FOR 5 MINUTES. LESSON DELAYED FOR 10 MINUTES BECAUSE OF FIRE ALARM.

A.P.: Right, now very briefly what is the social situation Buddy finds himself in at the Satellite Youth Club? How does he react to that both generally and in these specific circumstances? We're told both in fact. (pause)¹ Justin?

JUSTIN: He handled it well but he's uneasy when he went in.

A.P.: Does it say he's uneasy when he goes in normally?

VOICES?: No. No. Yeah.

A.P.: Because it did.

DONALD/SIMON: Unless Charmian and Julius are there.

A.P.: Well what does he make a point of doing.

?: Checking if they're there.

A.P.: Making sure he arrives..

DONALD/SIMON: Late.

A.P.: Yes. Have any of you done that. Knowing that you are going into an awkward social situation and tried to make sure that your allies are there beforehand. (pause) Come on!

PAUL: I used to go to a Youth Club near where I lived. I told my friends I would meet them. I would always let them get there first before I came so I used to be there about twenty minutes later.

A.P.: So would you say that Buddy's reactions in those circumstances is just simply because it's um um a Youth Club.

?: No, no.

SIMON: I think it's because he.. he doesn't know anybody else there. If you know he's in a sort of very, very strange environment, like and they're all coloured people in there. If it was a white Youth Club then I think he would find it a bit easier to go into.

A.P.: You think so?

?: Yeah, yeah.

JOHN: if it was me I don't think I would have.. I would have even tried to go in there.

A.P.: Why not?

JOHN: I'd feel too out of place and all these black people looking at you and people staring--- I'd be frightened what---

A.P.: Pardon?

JOHN: I'd be frightened what to say---

A.P.: You'd be frightened of what to say.

JOHN: Yeah.

¹ Transcription conventions:

.. indicates brief hesitation by speaker

(pause) indicates longer pause

- indicates speaker is cut off by next speaker

--- indicates indistinct speech

DONALD: I don't believe you know I don't think there's any difference between whites and blacks apart from their colour. They're all the same aren't they?

SIMON: (sitting next to Donald) Yeah but some people do.

A.P.: Well, I I-

DONALD: I mean-

SIMON: But that's what you think.

DONALD: No but most people-

A.P.: Let's look at the specific circumstances of this particular visit. What makes it awkward even with Julius and Charmian there. Charmian is off dancing.

MARION: They were all with their friends and talking---

PAUL: That boy made him feel a bit unwelcome.

A.P.: Dennis.

PAUL: Yeah.

A.P.: The tall thin one.

PAUL: Yeah.

A.P.: What does it actually state in the text.. that's in his eyes?

VOICES: Hatred.

A.P.: Did that strike you that word?

VOICES: Yeah.

A.P.: What does.. how does Julius account for that?.. How does Julius account for that in the text?.. Marion.

MARION: He'd had some trouble with some white kids at school.

A.P.: He'd had some trouble with some white kids at school.. and how does Buddy reply to that? It's quite a sharp reply actually.. Neil.

NEIL: So did I.

A.P.: So did I. Will Julius accept the parallel? (Murmurs No. Long pause)

A.P.: Tanya.

TANYA: No.

A.P.: No he won't. (Voice rising suggests endorsement) Why not?

IAN: Julius will but his friends won't.

A.P.: Julius will but his friends won't. (Somewhat quizzical)

NEIL: Because Buddy's right as well.. and---

A.P.: In what way?

(Long pause and shuffling)

A.P.: Yeah?

PHILIP: Well it's not so bad you know say if um say I have trouble with a white but um if blacks have trouble with whites and whites have trouble with blacks it's different.

SIMON: Being racist.

A.P.: It's different.

PHILIP: Yeah.

A.P.: Why?

PHILIP: Because um-

DONALD: They're all the same.

A.P.: Sh! (to Donald) Why?

PHILIP: Well if a black has trouble with whites there's all different names that white people call blacks.

A.P. Somebody could name names that white kids call white kids!

PHILIP: Yeah, but you can't call names that white kids call black kids, you can't call a white kid that.

A.P.: Well what have the kids been calling Buddy?

VOICES: Dustman!

A.P.: Dustman.. (murmurs from class) and he isn't.

DONALD: Yeah.. no.. but a black boy could be called that as well couldn't he?

SIMON: But it's just being-

A.P.: What's your attitude towards Dennis incidentally. I mean Dennis flicks into the novel and flicks out again. I don't think we see him again.. (pause). Makes a little disquieting appearance and then goes away. What's your reaction towards him?

MARION: I think he.. like in drama at the moment.. I think he just automatically felt that it was him.

A.P.: He automatically thought it was him.. sorry?

MARION: Him being black. He thought it was I suppose being racist but when white kids have an argument they wouldn't think that---

A.P.: Jacky?

JACKY: He kinds of thinks that all white kids will be against him as well.

A.P.: Yes, but I was actually asking more directly what's your attitude towards the character Dennis?

JACKY: He kind of thinks that the white kids are the same.

A.P.: No, I'll ask again. What's your attitude towards Dennis.. Ian Pollard.

IAN: Well he's sort of a typical black because they sort of judge you as how they judge their friends and you're a different colour and they think that you make racist remarks about them whatever. They think you're in a sort of gang, who sort of make remarks about them.

A.P.: So you don't like him?

IAN: No.

A.P.: Not sympathetic towards him.

SIMON: I think that he Dennis thinks that as Julius likes a white boy then he might not like him as much.

A.P.: Wwww.. (thinking) Jealousy is what you're saying.

SIMON: Yeah.

A.P.: Jealousy. Interesting sl.. yes an interesting slant. I didn't think of that.

ANDREW: I think he doesn't like blacks (BELL RINGS) but because Buddy hangs around with them he's trying to pick on them.

A.P.: He's picking on Buddy because he's hanging around with blacks. Now why should he do that?.. (pause) Now why should he do that? (Raising voice) Isn't he doing exactly what 3E is doing?.. by doing that? (voice lowered, followed by pause)

BRIAN²: Um he's probably doing that to Buddy because he's had trouble with white people in the past.

A.P.: And he's assuming something.

BRIAN: Yeah.

² Brian, a white student who had come from London, was shortly afterwards transferred to a lower band class.

DONALD: He's assuming all whites are the same.

BRIAN: He's probably saying he can't trust white people---

A.P.: Right, can we just have one more comment, er Gaby Cooke.

GABY: He probably thinks that white people ought to sort of go out with white people and black people ought to go out with black people.

A.P.: Do you think that's what 3E thinks as well.

VOICES: Yeah, no.

A.P.: Well, we're going to have to stop. That's a pity about that fire alarm.. Still never mind.. (Class dismissed).



FRIEDRICH

Grandfather

Afterwards Grandfather took his place—always the same one—at the living room table. He sat very straight. Father sat down opposite him; Mother remained standing behind Grandfather's chair so she wouldn't miss anything he asked for.

I crouched silently in the corner, red-scrubbed hands on cleanly washed knees. Whenever I moved, Mother looked at me; she laid a finger on her lips, reminding me to be silent.

Grandfather, as usual, talked at Father; he reproached him for not trying hard enough to find work. And Father listened with his head humbly lowered because he knew how the conversation would end. It always ran the same course. At the end, Grandfather said without fail: 'If you had gone to the railway as I did, you wouldn't have brought your family to such misery!'

Father nodded in resignation.

'But the boy,' Grandfather always added, 'the boy will go to the railway. I will see to it myself. The boy shall have a secure future and be entitled to an old age pension!'

Father agreed with Grandfather; he agreed with him in everything. Because Grandfather helped support us. As long as we had only Father's unemployment pay, Grandfather sent us money each month. This amount went into the household fund. Without it we'd have been hungry even more often. Suddenly, there was such a violent bump upstairs that our lamp shook.

'That was Friedrich!' I said.

Grandfather looked at me sternly. Then he asked Father, 'Who is Friedrich?'

Father readily explained. 'Above us lives a Jewish

Father and Mother looked frightened. It was quiet, dreadfully quiet, in the living room.

The doorbell rang.

Mother hurried to the door.

Outside I heard Friedrich's voice: '... can he come upstairs please?'

Mother whispered: '... not possible ... Grandfather's here.'

She shut the door and returned to the living room.

'Who was that?' Grandfather asked imperiously.

'A child from the neighbourhood,' Mother replied.

'Would you like another cup of coffee?'

family, the Schneiders. Their boy's name is Friedrich. The two are the same age; they are friends.'

Grandfather cleared his throat. 'A Jewish family?' he enquired.

'Yes,' Father said, 'nice people.'

Grandfather said nothing for a while by pressing his lips hard together. Then he began: 'I once had a superior who was a Jew. Cohn his name was. None of us liked him. He always smiled, even when he told you off. Friendly on the surface, he'd ask whoever it was made a mistake into his office. There he'd explain everything you'd done wrong, as if you were a schoolboy. And always with a special friendliness. One time—it was summer—I saw that he wore a square rag on his chest and back underneath his shirt, a prayer shawl with a fringe on it. He didn't even take his hat off in a room. No, I really don't like to remember Herr Cohn.'

Neither Father nor Mother commented on Grandfather's story.

Grandfather looked at us. Then he said, 'We are Christians. Bear in mind that the Jews crucified our Lord.'

Here Father interjected, 'But not the Schneiders!' Mother's face changed colour.

Grandfather got up from the chair. He leaned on the table with his knuckles. So sharply it came out like a snarl, he ordered, 'I do not wish the boy to associate with this Jew!' He sat down again as suddenly as he had stood up.

I bounded ahead. At the corner was a small stationery shop. To get into it you had to go down a few steps. Besides ink, drawing pads, and coloured paper, it also sold sweets: chocolate bars at five pfennigs each or liquorice at two pfennigs a stick. The shop belonged to a little old man with a pointed beard. We bought our notebooks in his shop. The old man was always kind and friendly. Often he took a pfennig off the price and gave us some sweets as well.

Sometimes we had made fun of the old man and his goat's voice, bleating loudly as we came down his stairs. But he never took this amiss. Indeed, it sometimes occurred to us that he would bleat extra loud for our sakes.

Outside his shop a crowd had collected. The people stood pressed so closely together that one couldn't see what was going on. A few were laughing and jeering, others looked serious.

We shoved our way to the front of the throng to see better. No one hindered us; a young woman even gave us a push forward.

Beneath the sign ABRAHAM ROSENTHAL, STATIONERY a man in grey breeches straddled the entrance to the shop. His puttees were untidily wound around his calves. He wore an armband with a swastika on the left sleeve of his yellow shirt.

In his right hand he held a broomstick, an ordinary

she told him, 'Thank you very much, young man.' Holding herself very straight, she walked past the crowd, carrying the shopping bag in such a way that everyone could see the wrapping paper she had bought. Near-sightedly she smiled at them all and walked away.

Abraham Rosenthal stepped into the doorway of his basement shop. His face serious, he peered at the people outside his shop.

Politely Friedrich greeted Herr Rosenthal so pointedly that no one could fail to notice.

I merely nodded to him.

The little man with the pointed beard answered with a silent bow. Through clenched teeth the sign bearer snarled at us: 'Get away from here, go on!'

Friedrich looked him up and down and said, 'We can stand here as long as you can!'

The man pushed out his lower jaw; taking a deep breath he asked in a threatening voice: 'Want to be cheeky, brat?'

A few people walked away, the rest drew back a step. All of a sudden it was utterly quiet; no one talked, no one laughed.

We stood alone. The man breathed hard. The cardboard sign shook.

I saw a hand settling on Friedrich's shoulder at the same time that I felt a touch on mine.

We both turned around.

Behind us stood Friedrich's father. He said: 'Come! Then he took us home.

broomstick, and fastened to it was a cardboard sign that read, in clumsy letters:

DON'T BUY FROM JEWS.

An old woman carrying a worn shopping bag walked up to the sign. From her coat pocket she pulled a pair of glasses that were missing one ear piece. Holding them close to her eyes, she tried to read the sign.

The sign carrier pretended not to notice the old woman, staring right over her at the crowd.

The woman put her glasses back in her pocket. Searchingly she pattered back and forth in front of the man with the armband; finally, she stopped and said, quietly: 'Kindly let me pass!'

Without moving and without looking at the woman, the picketer recited in a monotone: 'DON'T BUY FROM JEWS!'

'But I want to!' the old woman insisted; and when the man didn't budge, she squeezed between him and the wall and flitted down the stairs and into the shop.

The bystanders grinned. In the back rows, some even laughed out loud.

The man with the sign didn't move a muscle; only his left hand, thumb stuck behind the buckle of his belt, clenched into a fist.

Shortly afterwards the old woman pulled herself up the stairs. A roll of blue wrapping paper for schoolbook covers peaked out of her bag. Smiling, the woman—leading with her shoulder—pushed herself past the man. With a nod,

The Rabbi

The rabbi waved this aside and continued, 'The Nazis are searching for me. I am hiding in the Schneiders' flat. Not for long! Friends are going to help me further.' He stood right in front of me. 'You know what will happen to me if I'm caught? If the Lord our God has pity on me, death—otherwise unspeakable suffering! But this not only threatens me. It also threatens those who have given me shelter and kept me hidden.'

I looked at my feet and said nothing.

'I also know,' the rabbi continued, 'what will happen to you if you don't inform against me. You, and you alone, must decide our fate. If it's too difficult a burden for you to carry, say so, so that we may at least save Friedrich and his father. I will not curse you if you tell me to leave.'

Herr Schneider, the rabbi, and Friedrich all looked at me. I didn't know what to do. The rabbi was a stranger to me. And what about my mother and father? Didn't they stand closer to me than this Jew? Might I endanger myself and them for the sake of a stranger? Would I never give myself away? Would I be able to bear the secret or would I suffer under it like Herr Schneider?

The longer I hesitated, the more urgent the three faces before me became.

'I don't know what to do!' I said very softly. 'I don't know.'

How would you advise the narrator?
(Give all your feelings, thoughts and reasons...)

And the *Sunday Express* said:

THE MARCH OF TIME

The Jews

"And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel."

THERE is a new exodus of the children of Israel, not from Egypt but from Germany. But it is the old method which is being used to drive them forth. That is the method of terror.

* * *

Inside Germany the Jews are being herded from one place to another in Black Marias. They are driven to and fro, threatened and insulted.

And although, so far as can be seen, no actual violence has been shown them in the present outbreak, the children of Israel are sore afraid.

* * *

The Jews are being persecuted in Germany because they became too prosperous in the German State.

Half the lawyers and half the doctors in Germany were Jews. The persecution of Jews always follows the prosperity of the Jews.

There is nothing new in this form of persecution.

* * *

FOR remember the story of Russia and the Ten Thousand.

Half a century ago the Jews owned a great part of the agricultural land of Russia. Then it was that a Russian agitator stood on a tub and declared that the Jews were using Christian blood to make their Easter bread.

There was a riot which spread from village to village over the whole of Russia and ten thousand Jews were killed.

* * *

IN Britain half a million Jews find their home.

They are never persecuted and, indeed, in many respects the Jews are given favoured treatment here.

But just now there is a big influx of foreign Jews into Britain. They are over-running the country. They are trying to enter the medical profession in great numbers. They wish to practise as dentists.

Worst of all, many of them are holding themselves out to the public as psycho-analysts. A psycho-analyst needs no medical training, but arrogates to himself the functions of a doctor.

And he often obtains an ascendancy over the patient of which he makes base use if he is a bad man.

* * *

The hostility to the Jews in Germany cannot be condoned. But beware lest the present rush of Jews into this country injures the cause of Jewry here.

For professional men naturally resent their livings being taken from them by immigrants from foreign countries, whether they be Jew or Gentile. .

* * *

THERE is no intolerance in Britain today.

Intolerance is loathed and hated by almost everybody in this country. And by keeping a close watch on the causes which fed the intolerance of the Jews in other European countries we shall be able to continue to treat well those Jews who have made their homes among us, many of them for generations.

Sunday Express 19th June 1938

Editorial from the SUNDAY EXPRESS 19th June 1938

What do you think are the views of this writer?

What are possible views of the people for whom he is writing?

Are there any statements offered as facts of which you are suspicious?

Are there any phrases that make you feel uncomfortable? If so,
underline them and write your responses in the margins alongside.

APPENDIX 6.5 'TIME FOR JUDGEMENT'



Window design
by
Roman Halter

When you have heard the evidence discuss whether the accused could have responded differently. Consider the following:

- Can an individual act differently from the way she or he is being pressurised by her or his group or society? Any examples?
- Did the accused put the comfort and safety of her or his own family first, before reacting morally to the persecution she or he saw? Should a moral response have come first or been equally important?

THE CHARGE:

Breaking the moral laws of Leviticus 19: 16 & 18 -

"Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

YOUR PERSONAL VERDICT:

Guilty ☐ Not Guilty ☐

On what do you base your verdict?

THE GROUP'S VERDICT:

Guilty ☐ Not Guilty ☐

On what is this verdict based? If you personally disagree with it write why.

THE HOLOCAUST



"Many Jews knew that it was Christians who pushed them into the gas chambers. It is no good saying they were not real Christians any more than we should say that those who did not go regularly to the synagogue were not real Jews."

- Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Runcie, 9th November 1988, remembering the victims of the Kristallnacht pogrom 50 years earlier, at a service attended also by Cardinal Hume, head of the Catholic Church, and the Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits.

At the same service Cardinal Hume said:

"...it is important that each of us accept some measure of responsibility for the crime..."

We must show we have learnt the lessons of the Holocaust.

If we do not resist the first signs of injustice and violence, we will "pay the price when the forces of evil seem to take possession of the world."

FIRST THEY CAME....

First they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the communists
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me -
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.

- Pastor Niemöller (victim of the Nazis)



Window designs
by
Roman Halter

THE HOLOCAUST

- What does Cardinal Hume mean by saying it is our responsibility to resist the first signs of injustice and violence?
- Can you relate what he is saying to FRIEDRICH?
- Is there any personal meaning for you in this or does it all seem too distant?

Imagine you have been asked to submit an entry for a radio programme called 'WHAT A YOUNG PERSON TODAY THINKS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST'. If possible discuss the questions above (as well as any others you think relevant) with other young people and/or adults before making your tape recording. You may work with a partner and submit a joint entry. You may also include recorded conversations or interviews with people about the subject.



*Photograph from the Archives of Yad Vashem,
Jerusalem*

RIOT AREA

They have burnt my hut.
Not strangers, not Police,
The people sent by Government to burn,
They have not burnt my hut,
It is my friends.
For shall I not call them friends,
That village next to ours?
How cannot they be our friends
One stream gives water to us;
We mourn with them their deaths;
They cheer our weddings;
Always it has been so.
But they have burnt my hut.
One brand into the thatch
Nothing is left of my roof,
The falling timbers smashed my cups,
Chairs and tables are burnt,
A saved blanket covers me,
Now they have burnt my hut.

J.H. Chaplin

The experiment

There he stood, through the glass, looking like us,
 Blue eyes, blue shirt, suede jacket and suede shoes,
 Like you or me. His head wired up, he stood
 There looking normal, through the glass,
 The man I killed.

'We're testing the heuristic role of pain,'
 Said the Director, lying. 'He'll try and join
 Two paper clips together with one hand.
 You watch, you judge, you punish. If you stand
 Holding this lever, pull it when he fails,
 He'll get a shock, and learn. And if he fails
 Again, you pull again. He fails, you pull.
 He learns (or doesn't). And you watch, and pull
 Again until he does. And watch the dial,
 It may read DANGER.'

So I watched and pulled.
 I was the man in charge. The man I killed
 Fumbled, and failed. I watched the needle quiver
 Past the red line, and still I pulled the lever.

Once I turned, saying 'Are you sure? I mean —'
 'Go on, please,' the Director said. 'Go on.
 It is imperative the test go on.'
 I pulled. He dropped the clips. I pulled. He failed.
 The needle leapt; I watched the man I killed.

Later it was explained: 'We tested you,'
 Said the Director. 'Most people pull the lever,
 And so did you. Most people pull past DANGER,
 And so did you.' And then the man I killed
 Came through the door, shook hands with me, and smiled.
 He didn't know how many times he'd died.
 (Of course no current flowed.)

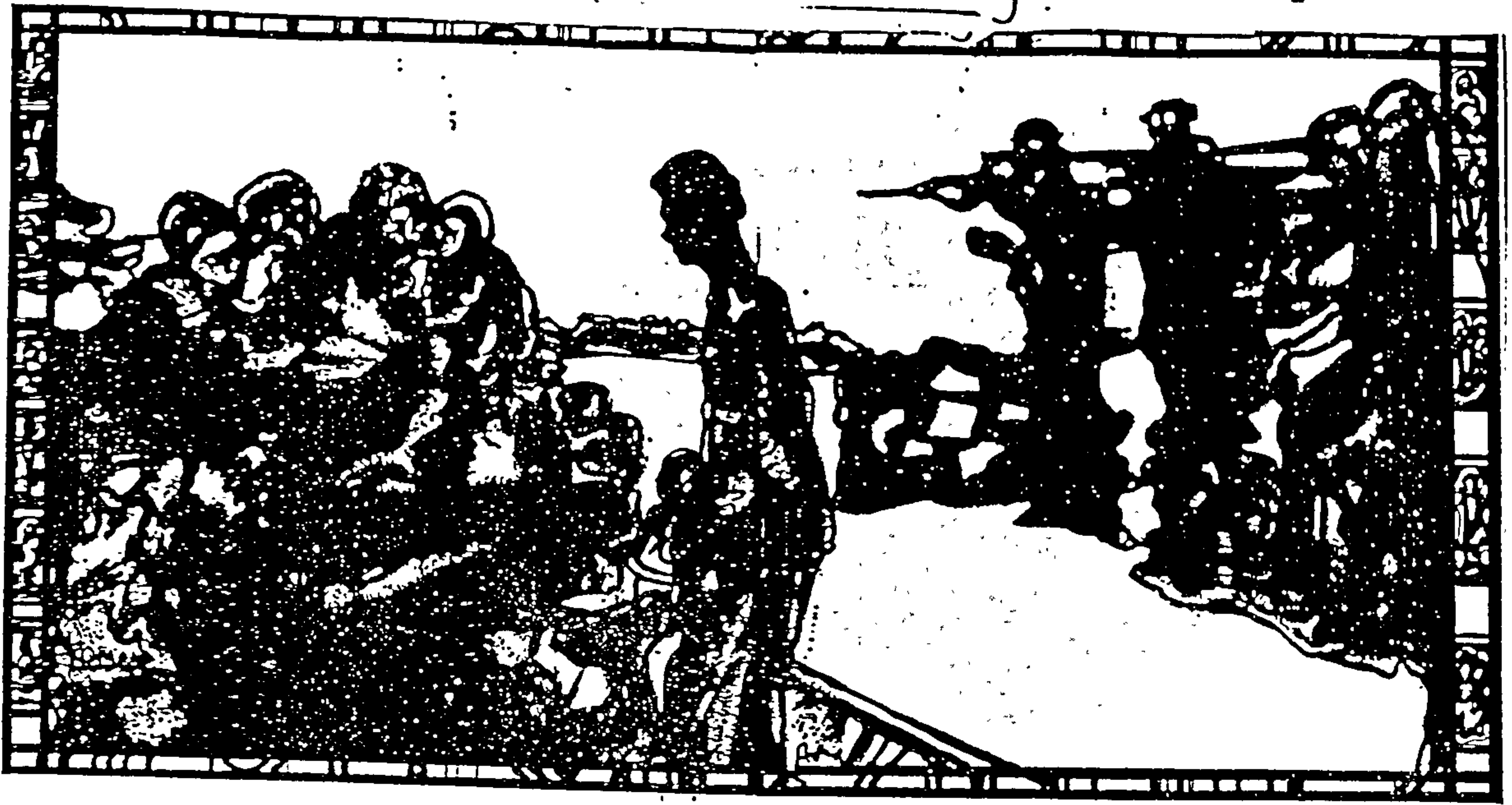
It's over now. I hated that Director
 For weeks. If he'd been wired onto my lever
 I would have pulled until I broke the dial,
 Till his blood bubbled, brains began to boil,
 — Standing there, in his scientific voice,
 saying 'Go on.'

And then when that was over,
 It was myself I hated. Pulling levers,
 I would wake up, and feel the shock, or see
 Flesh shrivel.

Then the man I'd killed was me.

And now that's over. What I have to carry
 Now, is the knowledge that I'm ordinary.
 The world is full of levers, and of us,
 Who pull the levers: it's as commonplace
 As glass, as people, or as burning flesh.

What are the roots of this?



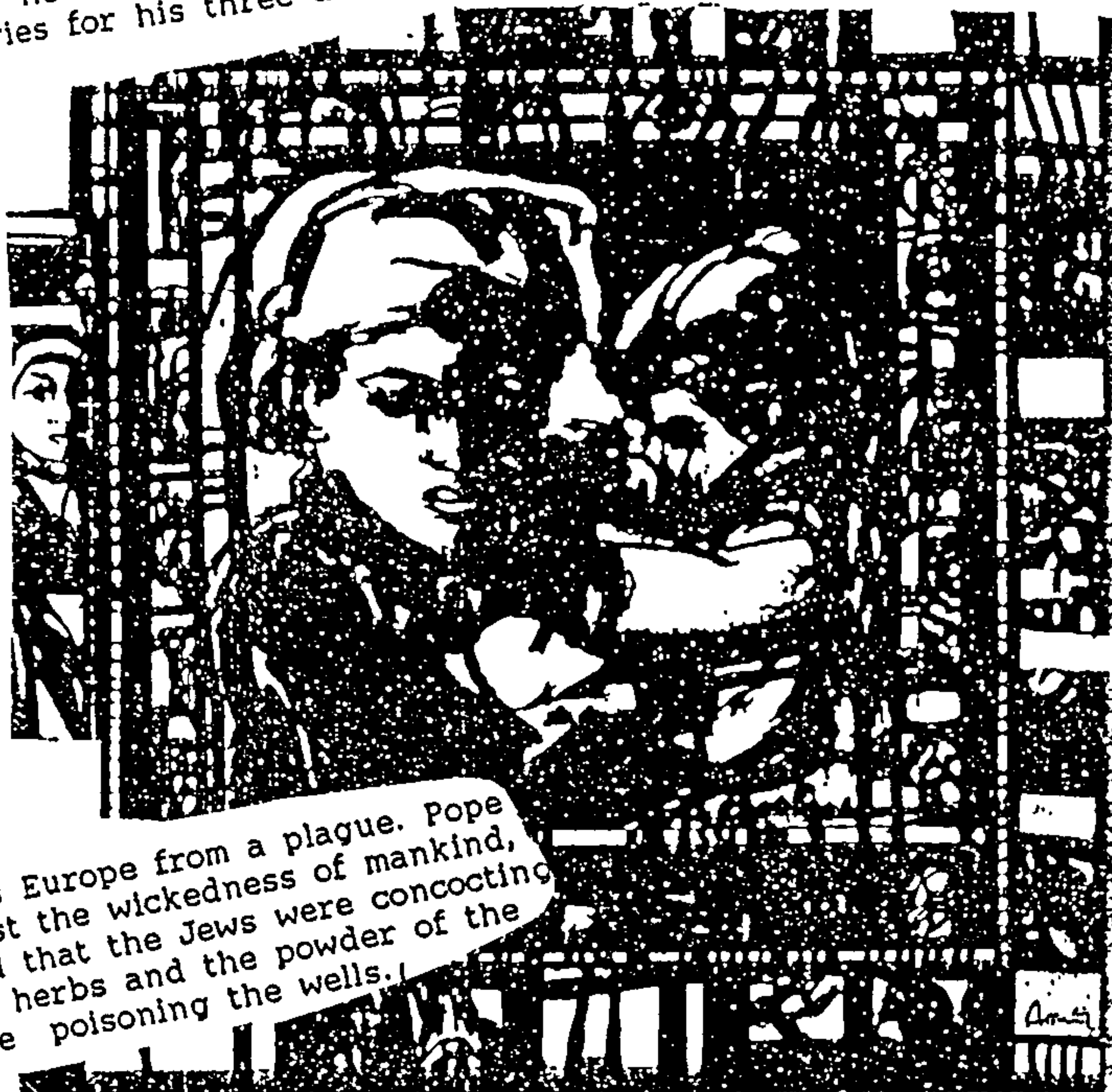
1066 A.D. - William the Conqueror brought Jews into England with him. to be his bankers. They were essential to him since Christians were forbidden to be usurers or money-lenders. Money-lending was one of the few occupations open to Jews and so the Jew already wrongly regarded as the killer of Christ, came to be stereotyped as a usurer, someone living for money. It was forgotten that Christ himself was a Jew.

1137 A.D. - Just before the festival of Passover a child's body was discovered in a forest near Norwich and a rumour started that Jews used Christian blood when making unleaven bread for the Passover. No Jew was convicted but the slur of ritual murder remained.

1189 A.D. - Richard I wouldn't have Jews at his coronation because of fear of witchcraft. Women weren't allowed either for the same reason. But Jews still came, bringing gifts, and there was a massacre - 100 Jews were killed, followed by massacres in Norwich, Bury St. Edmunds and York. In York the slaughter was followed by the guardians at York Cathedral being forced to hand over all the records of debts owed to Jews. A fire was then lit inside the Cathedral to burn the papers by which Christians had been "oppressed".

1255 A.D. - A boy called Hugh disappeared in Lincoln and 18 Jews were charged. They refused to plead and were hanged. The Pope, in 1297, wrote about the case, saying that the Jews "are falsely accused of partaking of the heart of a murdered child at the Passover... The truth is completely the opposite." But many Christians still believed that Jews were ritual murderers.

1290 A.D. - Edward I expelled 160,000 Jews from England when he found he could use Italian bankers instead. He used the Jews' confiscated property in providing marriage dowries for his three daughters.



1347 A.D. - 25 million people died across Europe from a plague. Pope Clement VI saw it as God's wrath against the wickedness of mankind, but many members of his flock believed that the Jews were concocting potions made up of human blood, secret herbs and the powder of the consecrated Host, with which they were poisoning the wells.

1594 A.D. - Shakespeare's play The Merchant of Venice was first performed showing Shylock, a Jew, demanding a pound of flesh to be taken from a Christian who couldn't pay his debts. Nine years earlier there had been an actual 'pound of flesh' case in Rome presided over by the Pope. But there was an important difference - it was a Christian who had demanded a pound of flesh from a Jew.

WINDOW DESIGNS

by

Roman Halter

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

1655 A.D. - Jews were re-admitted to England by Cromwell but false images and stereotypes of Jews still remained.

1794 A.D. - For the very first time there was a full length, sympathetic portrait of Jews on the stage, in a play by Richard Cumberland. At this time there were about 8000 Jews in England, living on the fringes of society or in closed ghettos. Cumberland's Jew says:
"If your playwrights want a butt or a buffoon or a knave to make sport of, out comes a Jew to be baited and buffeted through five long acts for the amusement of all good Christians. Cruel sport, merciless amusement... How can you expect us to show kindness when we receive none?"

Information from 'Enter One in Sad Green - The Portrayal of Jews on the Stage Since the Middle Ages - a talk by Monty Haltrecht, Radio 4, 1 November 1988

ROLL OF THUNDER

Write down your thoughts and feelings alongside this passage as you read it.

"Come on, man," T.J. persuaded. "Why stay up here waitin' for that devilish bus when we could be at school outa this mess?"

"Well . . ."

T.J. and Claude jumped from the bank. Then Stacey, frowning as if he were doing this against his better judgment, jumped down too. Little Man, Christopher-John, and I followed.

Five minutes later we were skidding like frightened puppies toward the bank again as the bus accelerated and barreled down the narrow rain-soaked road; but there was no place to which we could run, for Stacey had been right. Here the gullies were too wide, filled almost to overflowing, and there were no briars or bushes by which we could swing up onto the bank.

Finally, when the bus was less than fifty feet behind us, it veered dangerously close to the right edge of the road where we were running, forcing us to attempt the jump to the bank; but all of us fell short and landed in the slime of the gully.

Little Man, chest-deep in water, scooped up a handful of mud and in an uncontrollable rage scrambled up to the road and ran after the retreating bus. As moronic rolls of laughter and cries of "Nigger! Nigger! Mud eater!" wafted from the open windows, Little Man threw his mudball, missing the wheels by several feet. Then, totally dismayed by what had happened, he buried his face in his hands and cried.

T.J. climbed from the gully grinning at Little Man, but Stacey, his face burning red beneath his dark skin, glared so fiercely at T.J. that he fell back. "Just one word outa you, T.J.," he said tightly. "Just one word."

Christopher-John and I looked at each other. We had never seen Stacey look like this, and neither had T.J.

"Hey, man, I ain't said nothin'! I'm jus' as burnt as you are."

Stacey glowered at T.J. a moment longer, then walked swiftly to Little Man and put his long arm around his shoulders, saying softly, "Come on, Man. It ain't gonna happen no more, least not for a long while. I promise you that."

Again, Christopher-John and I looked questioningly at each other, wondering how Stacey could make such a rash promise. Then, shrugging, we hurried after him.

When Jeremy Simms spied us from his high perch on the forest path, he ran hastily down and joined us.

"Hey," he said, his face lighting into a friendly grin. But no one spoke to him.

The smile faded and, noticing our mud-covered clothing he asked, "Hey, St-Stacey, wh-what happened?"

Stacey turned, stared into his blue eyes and said coldly, "Why don't you leave us alone? How come you always hanging 'round us anyway?"

Jeremy grew even more pale. "C-cause I just likes y'all," he stammered. Then he whispered, "W-was it the bus again?"

No one answered him and he said no more. When we reached the crossroads, he looked hopefully at us as if we might relent and say good-bye. But we did not relent and as I glanced back at him standing alone in the middle of the crossing, he looked as if the world itself was slung around his neck. It was only then that I realized that Jeremy never rode the bus, no matter how bad the weather.

Where do you feel you are when reading this passage? Are you inside the story with particular characters, or viewing the events as an outside onlooker? Or does your position perhaps change? If so, how?

Answer overleaf.

Roll of Thunder

"But, Mama, it ain't fair. I didn't do nothin' to that confounded Lillian Jean. How come Mr. Simms went and pushed me like he did?"

Mama's eyes looked deeply into mine, locked into them, and she said in a tight, clear voice, "Because he thinks Lillian Jean is better than you are, Cassie, and when you —"

"That ole scrawny, chicken-legged, snaggle-toothed, cross —"

"Cassie." Mama did not raise her voice, but the quiet force of my name silenced me. "Now," she said, folding my hand in hers, "I didn't say that Lillian Jean is better than you. I said Mr. Simms only *thinks* she is. In fact, he thinks she's better than Stacey or Little Man or Christopher-John —"

"Just 'cause she's his daughter?" I asked, beginning to think Mr. Simms was a bit touched in the head.

"No, baby, because she's white."

Mama's hold tightened on mine, but I exclaimed, "Ah, shoot! White ain't nothin'!"

Mama's grip did not lessen. "It is something, Cassie. White is something just like black is something. Everybody born on this earth is something and nobody, no matter what color, is better than anybody else."

"Then how come Mr. Simms don't know that?"

"Because he's one of those people who has to believe that white people are better than black people to make himself feel big." I stared questioningly at Mama, not really understanding. Mama squeezed my hand and explained further. "You see, Cassie, many years ago when our people were first brought from Africa in chains to work as slaves in this country —"

"Like Big Ma's papa and mama?"

Mama nodded. "Yes, baby, like Papa Luke and Mama Rachel, except they were born right here in Mississippi. But their grandparents were born in Africa, and when they came there were some white people who thought that it was wrong for any people to be slaves; so the people who needed slaves to work in their fields and the people who were making money bringing slaves from Africa preached that black people weren't really people like white people were, so slavery was all right.

"They also said that slavery was good for us because it taught us to be good Christians—like the white people." She sighed deeply, her voice fading into a distant whisper. "But they didn't teach us Christianity to save our souls, but to teach us obedience. They were afraid of slave revolts and they wanted us to learn the Bible's teachings about slaves being loyal to their masters. But even teaching us Christianity didn't make us stop wanting to be free, and many slaves ran away —" She was silent a moment, then went on. "Well, after a while, slavery became so profitable to people who had slaves and even to those who didn't that most folks decided to believe that black people really weren't people like everybody else. And when the Civil War was fought and Mama Rachel and Papa Luke and all the other slaves were freed, people continued to think that way. Even the Northerners who fought the war didn't really see us equal to white people. So now, even though seventy years have passed since slavery, most white people still think of us as they did then—that we're not as good as they are—and people like Mr. Simms hold on to that belief harder than some other folks because they have little else to hold on to. For him to believe that he is better than we are makes him think that he's important, simply because he's white."

- UNDERLINE a sentence in which Mama tells Cassie why Mr. Simms wants to think his family is better than the Logans.

- UNDERLINE a sentence in which Mama tells Cassie how white people made slavery "all right" - so their consciences weren't troubled.

- WRITE what you think Mama might have replied if Cassie had asked her the questions below. Consider whether Mama will repeat the highly insulting term "nigger". If she does, remember to use speech marks around it to show it is not a word she would normally use herself:

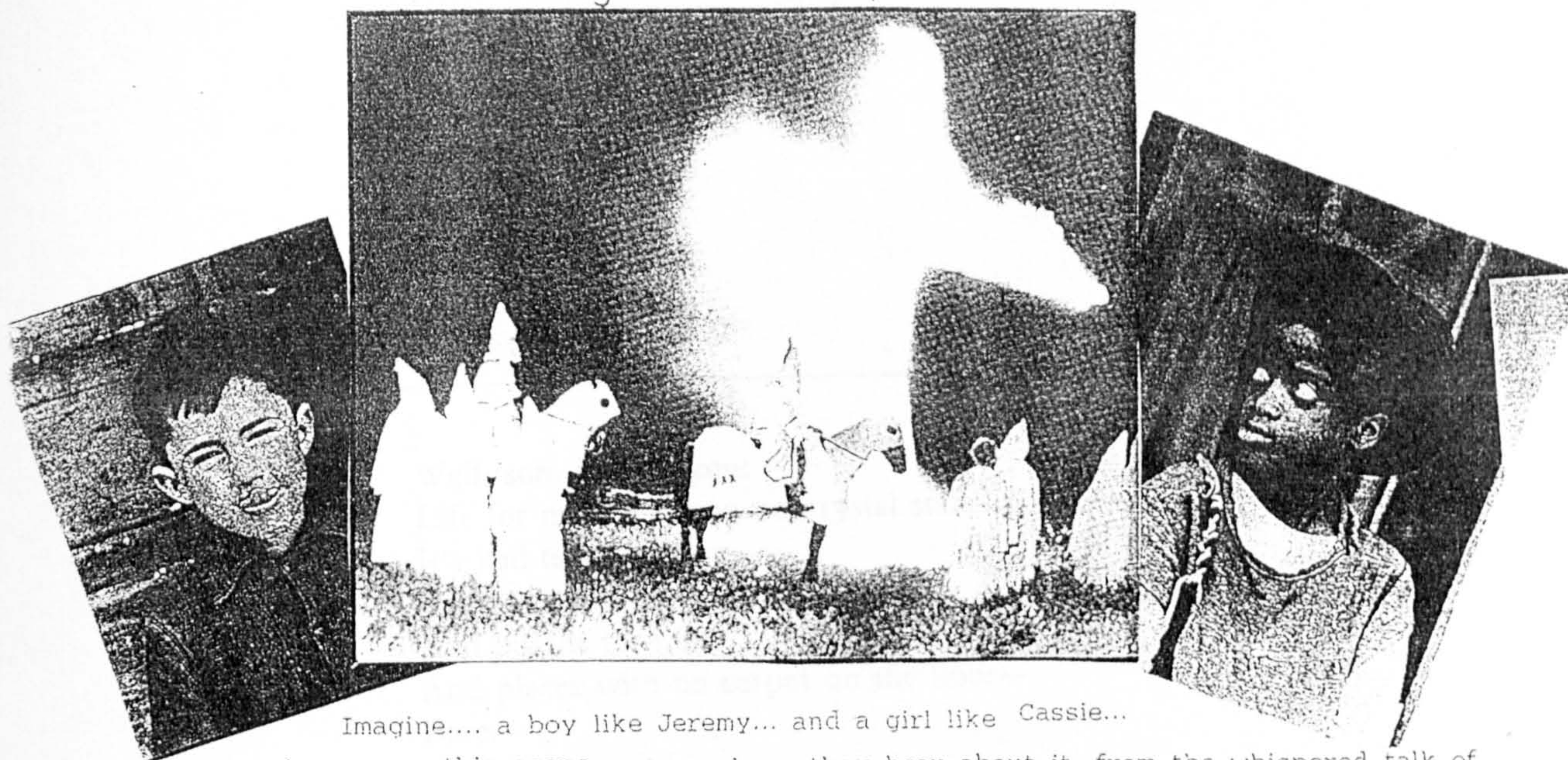
Cassie: Why did Mr. Barnett call me a "little nigger", Mama? Why did he make me wait so long?

Mama:..

- IMAGINE the story moves to 1989 and Cassie is now a grandmother. Her 9-year-old grandchild comes home from school furiously upset, saying some white children have called her/him a racist name. Write Grandma Cassie's reply. Read first in your documentary book about the Civil Rights Movement - pages 12-14 and 25-27, deciding what roles you think Cassie might have played. Try and feel her mood as you write.

Write overleaf

THE BURNING — a film script



Imagine.... a boy like Jeremy... and a girl like Cassie...
coming across this scene... or perhaps they hear about it, from the whispered talk of
adults, but each imagines the scene so vividly that each can feel the heat of the flames...

Imagine now that Jeremy suspects his older brothers, perhaps even his
father, is involved... and that Cassie too has overheard how Jeremy's
family is very probably involved. Cassie knows it could equally have
been her family going up in flames.

Write the dialogue for a film scene where the two children meet soon
after the fire. You know how much Jeremy wants to persuade Cassie to
be friendly. Think as deeply as you can about each character so that
the language and the tension is as real as possible. Explore the
dialogue to its fullest. Make it alive!

Start by stating the location i.e. where the scene takes place.

Mother to son

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes

Limbo Dancer's Soundpoem

Limbo

Go
down
low
low
low

show
dem
what
you know
know

know

let
limb
flow
flow

flow

as sound
of drum
grow
grow

grow

& body
bend
like bow
bow

bow

limb/bow

low
low
low

limb/bow

JOHN AGARD

limbo
limbo like me
knees spread wide
and the dark ground is under me
down
down
down
and the drummer is calling me
limbo
limbo like me
sun coming up
and the drummers are praising me
out of the dark
and the dumb gods are raising me
up
up
up
and the music is saving me
hot
slow
step
on the burning ground.

And limbo stick is the silence in front of me
limbo
limbo
limbo like me
limbo
limbo like me

long dark night is the silence in front of me
limbo
limbo like me

stick hit sound
and the ship like it ready

stick hit sound
and the dark still steady

limbo
limbo like me

long dark deck and the water surrounding me
long dark deck and the silence is over me

limbo
limbo like me
stick is the whip
and the dark deck is slavery

stick is the whip
and the dark deck is slavery

limbo
limbo like me
drum stick knock
and the darkness is over me
knees spread wide
and the water is hiding me

Edward Brathwaite, West Indies

What is "race"?

Apartheid denies baby her home

Johannesburg: South Africa's leading Opposition politician said yesterday that his party would raise in tiny abandoned plight of a race the Government cannot decide.

The month-old girl must be given a racial category of apartheid, but because her parents cannot be traced, experts are unsure what colour she is.

Progressive Party leader, Dr. Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, said yesterday: "Nothing illustrates the absurdity of trying to keep a human study book more poignantly than the story of this little baby."

Dr. Slabbert, speaking from Cape Town, said his party would take up the baby's case when the current parliament was over. The P.P.P., in any recess, is committed to ending apartheid.

The baby, named Lize Venter, sister of a white Venter, was found in a hospital where she is being cared for, weeks ago in a paper bag in a street in Pretoria, the South African capital.

Until her race is decided, she cannot be adopted or go into foster care, social workers say.

Lize, who was photographed at the hospital by local newspapers, does not have the features that would classify her as black under South African law.



White or Coloured? Lize Venter faces an uncertain future.

THE GUARDIAN, 25.7.83

This extract from a South African newspaper gives the wording used in South African law to define "racial groups". Do these definitions seem biologically sound and scientific to you? Give your reasons.

What do you think is the purpose of this sort of classification?

Every aspect of life in South Africa is determined by classification at birth of your "race". Some people still believe it is possible to classify people scientifically into separate "races" according to fundamental biological differences.

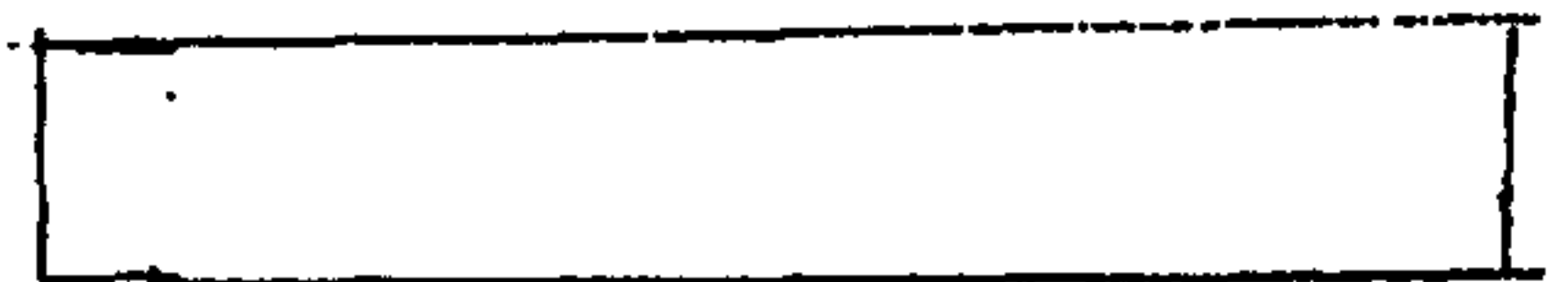
Population Registration Act

The Population Registration Act, which has been frequently amended to close loopholes, uses the following definitions of 'race':

- A white person is one who 'in appearance obviously is a white person and who is not generally accepted as a coloured person, or is generally accepted as a white person and is not in appearance obviously not a white person';
- Provided that 'a person shall not be classified as a white person if one of his natural parents has been classified as a coloured person or a black';
- A black person is a person 'who is, or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa';
- A coloured person is one 'who is not a white person or a black'.

Sunday Express 2.10.83.

Classification



1. What are your views on South Africa's system of "race" classification?

2. In your Science session on classification, did everyone in the group agree on the classifications chosen (e.g. for materials which conduct or insulate; assorted electrical objects; colours; pictures of people)? Did different groups agree?

3. What is the purpose of classification?

4. What do you think about classification of people?

SOUTH AFRICA

History

The discovery of South Africa by Europeans was made possible by the Portuguese pioneer Henry the Navigator. By collecting accurate maps he encouraged explorers to sail farther and farther southwards along the west coast of Africa. (See HENRY THE NAVIGATOR.) In 1488 the Portuguese explorer Bartholomew Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope and in 1497 Vasco da Gama, who was also Portuguese, landed at St. Helena Bay. He went on to discover Natal and to reach India, thus opening up the sea route from Europe to India. (See DIAZ, BARTHOLOMEW; GAMA, VASCO DA.)

For nearly 100 years this route was used only by the Portuguese, and they avoided landing near the Cape after losing a number of men in a fight with the Hottentots at Table Bay in 1510. Then the Dutch, English and French began to sail round Africa and to build empires in the East. In 1652 the Dutch under Jan van Riebeeck founded a colony at Cape Town so as to have a place where their ships could obtain fresh provisions, and a few Dutch colonists settled there (see RIEBEECK, JAN VAN). In 1688, a number of Huguenots or French Protestants, who had been driven from their country by King Louis XIV, settled at the Cape (see HUGUENOTS). They were skillful farmers and expert wine-makers. They soon intermarried with the Dutch colonists and adopted the Dutch language.

To produce the meat required by the ships the colonists had to keep cattle, and their large stock-farms soon spread over the country east and north of Cape Town. By the end of the 18th century there were about 15,000 settlers.

The natives of the Cape were then the Hottentots, who wandered over the country with their flocks and herds. Another people who were then spread over South Africa were the Bushmen, who were a very backward race of hunters. They were the enemies of all who cultivated the ground or kept cattle or sheep, and both Europeans and Hottentots attacked them without mercy. (See BUSHMEN AND HOTTENTOTS.)

The Hottentots were not reliable labourers so the white settlers brought in slaves from East and West Africa and the Malay Peninsula. As both slaves and Hottentots were backward peoples, the whites came to look down on everyone with a coloured skin. In those days the farming settlers called themselves *boeren* (Dutch for "farmers"). The English form of it is Boers.

When Great Britain went to war with France, in 1793, both countries determined to capture Cape Colony so as to command the sea route to the East. In 1795 the British captured it, but after the war, in 1803, they gave it back to the Dutch. When the war broke out again, the British took the Cape for a second time in 1806. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1814 the colony passed into British possession.

By this time the colonists were facing a new problem. When they had reached the Great Fish River they had met Bantu tribes, then referred to as the *Kaffirs*, coming from the other direction. These people were very different from the Hottentots. They not only herded animals but also cultivated the soil, and they were grouped together in warlike tribes. From 1779 to about 1853 much of the history of the Cape was taken up by the Kaffir Wars on the eastern border. Gradually the Bantu were defeated and pushed back, and those who had lost their lands went to work for the Boers.

Until 1820 the white colonists were mostly Boers, or South Africans of mainly Dutch origin, but in that year about 5,000 British settlers arrived at Port Elizabeth and settled near the eastern border. Other British settlers followed, coming mainly to Cape Town and the eastern districts.

Slavery in the British Empire was abolished in 1833 and the slave owners were paid money to make up for losing their slaves. However,

NO KIDDING

Children are children; adults are adults. These pages are for NI readers who don't fit into either of these categories.

Schoolchildren in South Africa are taught history with a white bias. Chris van Wyk sets the record straight, with illustrations by Mzwakhe.



1 What we now call South Africa was originally the country of black tribes such as the Khoisan. In 1652 Jan van Riebeeck, a Dutch sailor, landed at the Cape of Good Hope, the southernmost tip of Africa. The Khoisan people who lived there greeted him and gave him food and shelter. If only they had known that he was once called for stealing in his native country they might never have given him a place to stay for a while. But they did, and he and his people stayed forever. Today his face and the three ships with which he came adorn the South African currency.

2 The Dutch began to take the land by force. At first they were contented with a few acres. Then they started to claim more and more of the land as their own. With no land to live on with their cattle, the Khoisan and later other tribes were forced to work as slaves.

The African tribes didn't just stand by and watch their land being taken from them. They fought back with spears and shields - but the white people had guns and thousands of African people died fighting to keep what was theirs. By the early 1800s the British had arrived too and forced the Dutch (now called Boers) to go even farther north on the Great Trek. This meant fighting a war with the Zulu people, many of whom were killed at the Battle of Blood River. The British warred with the Zulus too, trying to strengthen their power over the country. They finally defeated King Cetewayo's army in 1880.



4 In 1948 the present National Party Government came to power and brought in APARTHEID. This meant keeping white and black people apart. It also meant a plan to make black people feel that they were an inferior race. And a plan to ensure that white people would always have the best jobs, schooling and housing.

Here are some of the laws passed by the apartheid government:

Marriage between blacks and whites was made illegal.

Black people were banned from receiving unemployment benefit.

Black and white people had to live in different places, and the black townships were much poorer and more crowded than the white areas.

Black children had to go to different schools and had to put up with an inferior education system. A South African prime minister once said that blacks did not need to be educated as they were all servants of whites.



African National Congress was born. It had a different name at the start but for the first time black people came together as one nation and not as different tribes. They resolved that they would talk white people into sharing the land with them.

Instead, in 1913, the white parliament passed a law saying that 87 per cent of the land belonged to white people. The remaining 13 per cent was arid land where hardly anything grew, so thousands of black men had to leave their wives and children and go to work in the gold mines. They did hard and dangerous work underground making white mine owners rich while being paid next to nothing.

In 1920 70,000 of these miners went on strike for higher wages. One of them commented: 'The white man goes below, does not work and gets big money. The African gets all the gold out of the ground and gets very little money. How is that fair?' The miner was arrested.

3 The Boers and the British didn't only fight Africans - they also fought each other in a war between 1899 and 1902. This was because gold had been discovered in the Boer province of Transvaal and the British wanted to get their hands on it too. But eventually they decided to join together in a united South Africa to be ruled by white people alone. In 1912 the

WARNING
NO ASIATICS
BANTUS OR
COLOURED
ALLOWED



WHITES ONLY
CHILDREN'S PLAY
CENTRE



5 In 1955 the ANC decided that they were wasting their time asking the enemy to free them. 'We must free ourselves' they said. So they called thousands of black and white South Africans to 'the Congress of the People' in Kliptown. At this meeting the Freedom Charter was born. Here is part of the Charter - compare it with the apartheid laws.

South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black or white. The people shall govern, and share in the country's wealth. But many blacks didn't believe that whites should 'share in the country's wealth.' 'Whites,' they said, 'are thieves who stole the land from us. Why should we share it with them now?'

These black people broke away from the ANC to form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Their slogan was 'Africa for the Africans.'



6 In 1960 the PAC and ANC began the Anti-Pass Campaign. Every black person over sixteen has to carry a passbook. This makes it possible for a small white government to control a huge black nation. Hundreds of black people are jailed every day for simply not having their passbooks with them. A man could go to work in the morning and not be seen for months. Why? Because he left his passbook at home.

The anti-pass campaign was launched to fight this unjust law. The plan was that all black people would march to the nearest police station, where they would hand over their passbooks and demand to be arrested. In Sharpeville hundreds of people did this. Police fired into the peaceful crowd. 69 people were killed.

The PAC and ANC were angered by these killings. They realised that the white racist government was prepared to murder even peaceful demonstrators. They decided to fight back.

7 In the early 1970s Black Consciousness was born in South Africa.

The man responsible for this was Steve Biko. Black Consciousness is popular because it makes blacks proud of their colour and their culture. The white government teaches blacks that it is a shame to be black. They do this in many different ways; at school, through newspapers and through the Bible. Once the government even banned a children's book called *Black Beauty*. They didn't bother to read the book themselves and so didn't realise that *Black Beauty* was really the name of a horse. They were afraid the book would teach black people to be proud of their culture and their colour.

The Government saw this pride growing among the black nation. They did not think it was a good thing. It was cheekiness and had to be stopped. And so they decided that all school subjects in black schools should be taught in Afrikaans. Imagine having to learn Biology in Latin... Would it anger you? It did anger students in South Africa.

And to show this anger they marched the streets of Soweto in their thousands on June 16, 1976. Police opened fire on them. Within a few months almost 900 students were killed. And in 1977 Steve Biko was arrested and killed in jail.



STEVE BIKO

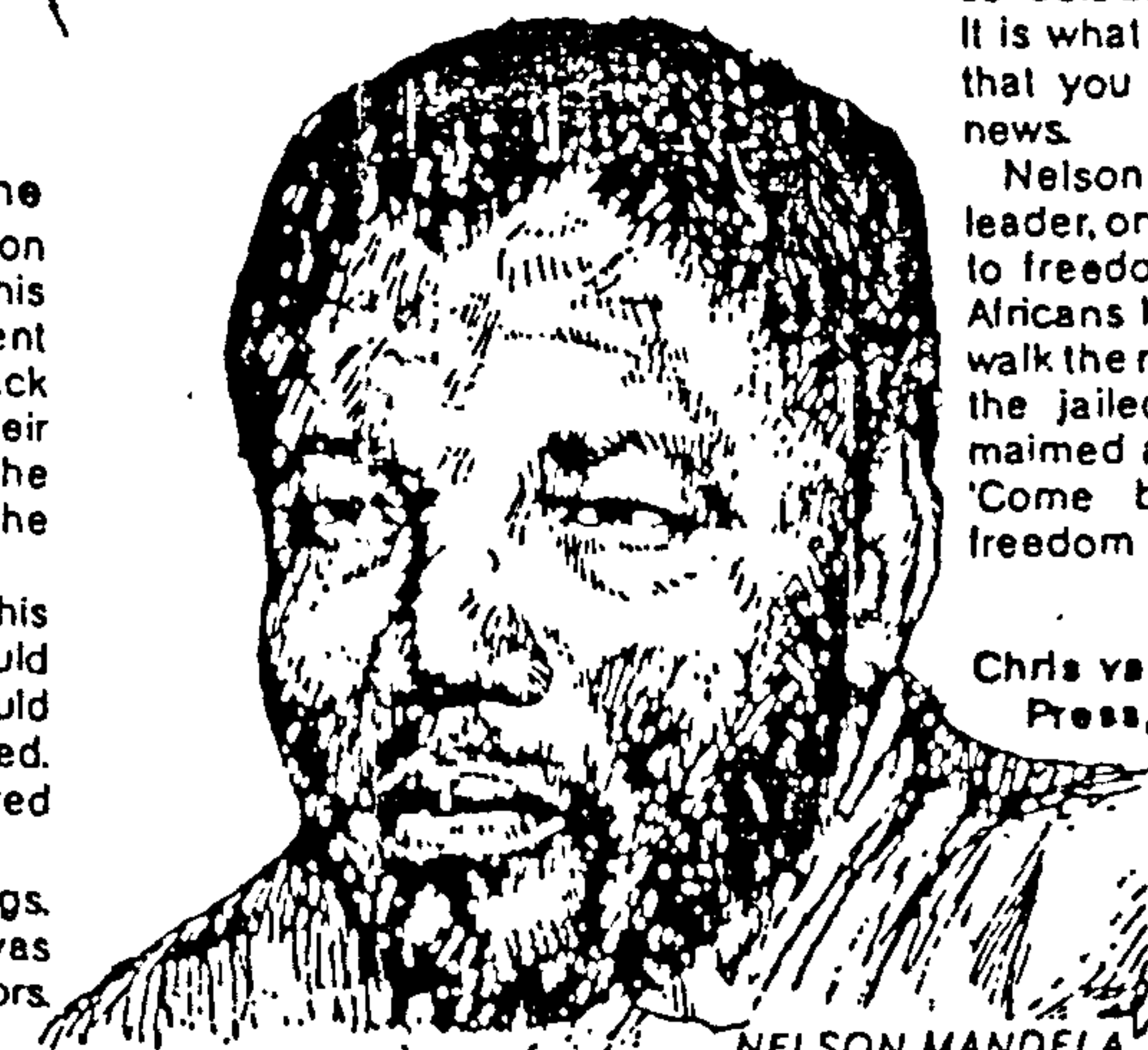
8 In the 1980s the South African Government has been trying to persuade people that it is prepared to change. This is because it is under pressure from big business, which is scared that it won't be able to make money so easily if there is a revolution. But it is also under pressure from its own racist white voters which don't want any change.

In 1982 'Coloured' (mixed race) and

'Indian' people were given the vote - but only for their own parliaments without any real power. And 'African' people - 74 per cent of the country's population - still have no vote. This injustice angered black people so much that they became more determined than ever to fight apartheid and the Government. And the more they have stood up for their rights, the more repressive the Government has become. This is what has led school students of all ages to boycott their schools and fight soldiers on the streets. It is what has led to the street warfare that you might have seen on the TV news.

Nelson Mandela, the jailed ANC leader, once said: 'There is no easy walk to freedom'. All freedom-loving South Africans know this. But every day they walk the road to freedom. The dying and the jailed and the starving and the maimed all urge each other on saying 'Come brother, come sister. Look, freedom is in sight!'

Chris van Wyk is an editor at Raven Press, a radical South African publishing house. He lives in the 'Coloured' township of Riverlea and is one of the country's best-known poets. He has also written a children's novel called *A Message in the Wind*.



NELSON MANDELA

Emily — A South African girl living in exile in Britain.

I have never planned to become a refugee. It just happened. If you are born black in South Africa, you have no choice. You are born into the struggle and you live that struggle until you decide to stop the injustice done to you. I was not going to allow myself to be treated like an animal. I am not going to allow others to make me feel inferior because I have a black skin. I have a right to live in dignity and without fear.

I am a Christian. To be a Christian in truth and reality in South Africa, is dangerous.

I tried to live out the teachings of Jesus as far as I understood them in my daily life. So — when I read in the Gospels, "I have come so that you may have life in all its fullness" — I know exactly what that means to me! It means that I must be free to move about without permits or arbitrary restrictions. It means that I must have adequate housing, earn a living wage. It means I must be allowed to marry the person I love, and not only those with the same skin colour as mine. (Imagine a law that prohibits people to love each other!) It means that I must live with my parents as a family and not have my father living in barracks, like an animal and classified as a "bachelor" because it is illegal for mother and us to live with him as a family unit.

If I do not have any of these things because certain people forced me through inhuman laws to be less human, then I have a right to fight for them and take them — to be able to live the full life that Jesus wants us to live.

But for me that struggle has led to prison and to exile.

I remember many things here in exile. I remember silly things like my sixteenth birthday. My mother was ill in hospital and my father planned a little party for me and the 20 girls in my class at school. Dad made lots of round sweet cakes, fried in fat (vetkoek we call them) and bought a huge chocolate cake for the centre of the table. We have had sweets, cold drinks and so on. What I vividly remember now, is the jelly! He poured too much water on the jelly powder and it would not set, would not gel! So we had "jelly cold drink" too!

I remember sad things as well. I always feel an ache and my eyes fill with tears when I relive and feel the pain, anger and frustration of one of my dear brothers, who was shot by the police during the countrywide school boycotts in 1976. I was in detention and was not allowed to attend his funeral. I cry for myself. I cry for the countless mothers and fathers whose children were brutally murdered in cold blood by the regime.

I know what it is to receive a letter saying: "Dad has lost his job and things are going to be tough at home. He is very depressed and worried about how he's going to feed us". I know how it feels to get a phone call from the sister because one of my brothers has been picked up by the police and they do not know why, nor have the family any access to him. I know how it feels to receive photos of little ones who were babies when I left and are now going to school. I feel violent then. It is violence that I should be forced to live away from my home, it is violence that I cannot see and touch and laugh and sing with my family.

I feel anger when I see the propaganda that South Africa is spilling out over the British TV and radio. I feel deep sadness inside of me when people lap this up and say,

"Things are changing in South Africa — things are not so bad". I cry: "For who is it changing? What change?"

I am now in this country. I can exist here. But I do not live here. My spirit lives at home. In South Africa. My body is one big blob of pain and identification so intense, with all the courageous and oppressed peoples of South Africa. Yet I feel hope surging in me. And joy when the news comes that after the police and the bulldozers have pulled down the homes of the people at night — the mothers and children would get out of the bushes where they were hiding and in the early hours of the morning start building their plastic and zinc houses all over again. I feel like shouting: "That's my people! That's my sisters."

Being in exile is like being in a struggle within the struggle. Everything is different. Everything is not "home" and I find myself many times saying: "That's not how we do it at home". Things like sharing. Sharing our food. Sharing our homes, our clothes, our possessions.

Very few people share here. They give of their excess. Some people don't even want to share their bedrooms. At home we have to share every single room in the house with others who haven't got a place to live. Here in this country, most people have a whole bedroom to themselves and you cannot fit in any more people. I find that strange. I find the isolation of people strange. Apartheid has tried to isolate us from one another, instead it has created just the opposite.

Well, not all my experiences are negative. I have discovered good people. People who are also working towards making the Kingdom of God a reality here in Britain. The ones who filled our cupboards with food and drink when we arrived without as much as a breadcrumb. The brothers and sisters who pray with us when a loved one is being detained. The church community in Notting Hill to which we belong, who pray for freedom in South Africa. The Justice and Development Group at the church, who burn a candle with us every time a person is killed by the police in South Africa. The many people that welcomed us into their homes and "adopted" us as part of the family. So many, many blessings and goodness have we found. All of which reminds me so poignantly of Gandhi when he said: "Walking through Delhi, I have met thousands of people, and all of them were my sisters and brothers".



WAITING FOR THE RAIN
- from ch. 4



"Don't leave before the master gets back, Joseph," Madam said. "He wants to examine you to make sure you're quite well now."

"He's staying here overnight, Madam," Matilda told her. "Tomorrow's my off, and we'll go back to the township together."

"Oh, are *you* off tomorrow. I thought Dora was. Make sure there's something cold for lunch then, Matilda. My brother and his family are coming for the day."

"Yes, Madam. And Madam, Joseph wants to say thank you to you and the master for paying for his train ticket."

Joseph stared at the cover of a comic book, remaining silent.

"Oh, as long as it did him good . . ." the madam said. "It's so *hot* in here with the oven on, my dress is sticking to me. I must go in for a swim. Matilda, be a dear and bring me a tray of tea at the pool." She went out.

Matilda folded the letter and put it in her apron pocket. She filled the teakettle and put it on to boil. "Well, Tengo will get books now," she said. "When Madam says she will do something, she does it."

Joseph stared at the cover of the comic book and said nothing.

Can you "thought-track" Joseph?
Write his thoughts

WAITING FOR THE RAIN - from Ch. 5

"There's going to be a big party for my uncle at the end of July," Frikkie told Tengo as they skimmed pebbles across the water. "A birthday party."

"How old will the oubaas be?" Tengo asked.

"Fifty. All my uncles and aunts and cousins are coming. My mother and father and sister will come and stay for the week. We're going to have a *braai*veis. My uncle says he'll butcher an ox, and your mother is going to bake an enormous birthday cake so that we can put fifty candles on it."

"The oubaas is getting old," Tengo observed.

"When he dies," Frikkie said, "this whole farm will be mine. You can work for me and be my boss-boy."

Tengo picked up a heavy, flat, grey pebble from the riverbank, took aim at a tree stump on the opposite side, took a step back, and with an overarm swing threw the stone, hitting the tree stump dead centre.

"Good shot," Frikkie said. He picked up a stone, aimed, threw, and missed. He sat down, leaning against the trunk of a willow, pulled a straw of dry grass, and chewed on it. "Will you, Tengo?"

"Will I what?"

"Will you be my boss-boy when this is my farm?"

Tengo, with perfect aim, hit the tree stump with a second stone. He stood for a few moments, looking down at Frikkie's hair, which was the same yellow as the willow branches, then turned and walked off.

"Hey—wait for me!" Frikkie shouted when, receiving no answer, he looked around and saw Tengo halfway up the slope. "Where are you going?" he asked as he caught up with him. "I'll get my soccer ball and we can have a game."

But Tengo went on, walking fast over the sere winter grass of the veld as if he had somewhere to go, as if he had received a message though he didn't know what the message was about.

Imagine you can hear the message that Tengo has received.... What is it saying?
Write it as a flow of thoughts and let it fill the box.

WAITING FOR THE RAIN

Chapter 14

Now Joseph told him that he was an organizer for the African National Congress, the A.N.C.—the exiled black organization whose leader, Nelson Mandela, had been in jail for over twenty years. Their members were forced to live outside the country and try to organize the resistance to apartheid from afar. Joseph said that he worked for them as a courier and as a recruiter.

"A recruiter?" Tengo asked. "For what?"

"Freedom fighters," Joseph said simply. He sugared his tea heavily, stirred it. "You know, Tengo, that the A.N.C. has always been against violence. At first they sought change by peaceful means. But look where that has got us." He pointed out the window as two armored police trucks lumbered past the house skirting the charred remains of a burned-out bus. "So now we have young people crossing over the border into Zambia and going to join the A.N.C. in Lusaka in order to train as freedom fighters."

Tengo had heard rumors of this. "And you're an organizer?"

Joseph nodded. "They have to be smuggled across the border. It's illegal—and dangerous. But so far our record is pretty good."

"You think I should become a *freedom fighter*?" Tengo asked. He could feel his heart thumping with apprehension.

"Wait, cousin. Not so fast. Listen to me first. When these young people get to Lusaka, the A.N.C. offers them three possibilities: First, they offer schooling to those who want it; second, they offer the opportunity to learn a trade; and third, for those who choose neither of these—"

"They offer military training," Tengo said in a low voice.

Joseph nodded. "That's right. Most of them say that they want to become fighters; they want to work for the revolution so that there will be training and education for everyone. But the leaders try to encourage some of them to go for schooling. They know that we will need skilled, educated people when the time comes. So—"

Now Tengo's heart was beating rapidly. "Joseph, do you think I could—"

"That is exactly what I am thinking, cousin. I think that would be the best thing for you. They send students to schools overseas. You might even have to learn a foreign language to do your studies in, depending on where you land up."

How would you advise Tengo after Joseph leaves him (at the end of the chapter)?

APPENDIX 10.1

DRAMA ACTIVITIES OVER THE YEAR

Sessions during reading of Buddy:

- Group reactions to outsider. Sharing personal experiences of being victim of a 'joke'. Hotseating of Julius Rybeero from Buddy (Group B only).
- Stimulus poem about girl's row with mother (Appendix 5.7). Brainstorming on child-adult conflicts. Devising 'typical' statements made by adults followed by students 'sociogramming' their attitudes (i.e. showing degree of approval or disapproval of certain statements by the position in which they stand).
- Status games in pairs. Improvisation of teacher Mr Normington and the Rybeeros at a parents' evening (filling gap in text from Buddy).
- Hotseating of characters in Buddy.
- Millie Murray's workshop. Millie hotseated as Charmian and Mrs Rybeero. Improvisations of the Rybeero twins and friends following a racist incident. Forum Theatre style improvisation of meeting between a grown-up Charmian (Millie) and Mr Normington (Philip) with interventions from other members of class in role as other characters from novel.

Sessions during reading of Friedrich:

- Re-reading article from 1938 'Sunday Express' about persecution of Jews in Germany (Appendix 6.4). Brainstorming on contemporary victims of intolerance. Role-reversal simulation on refugee Boat People in England and local residents near refugee centre.

- 'Jezreels' (a religious sect) role play 1 - outside school gates with 'Jezreels' nicknamed 'Scavvies', 'intolerants', 'middle-roaders', 'tolerants'. Hotseating of characters.
- 'Jezreels' role play 2 - 'Jezreel' children and parents; 'Jezreel' parents and school teacher. Hotseating.
- Forum Theatre role-play of Friedrich and Narrator from Friedrich (with other students advising on how roles should be played).
- Richard Finch's workshop on themes of 'difference' and 'the outsider'. Sharing an item of personal information. Forming groups on the basis of something in common. Students writing down what made each of them different. In small groups sharing situations of being an outsider. Creating still pictures of one of these and bringing it to life. Creating still pictures from Friedrich. Speaking in role as Friedrich and Nazi landlord Herr Resch.
- Re-enactment of penultimate scene from Friedrich (when Friedrich is excluded from air-raid shelter) - with licence to attempt to change the outcome. Hotseating of the narrator's parents as they appeared in the text (followed by 'Time for Judgement' sheet - Appendix 6.5).
- Richard Finch's workshop on 'survival' prior to viewing Anne Frank exhibition. Exercise in pairs with each resisting being pulled by other. Groups making statue labelled 'Resistance'. Discussion on resistance and survival. Talking in pairs about necessary preparations for going into hiding. Through still pictures brought to life, creation of scenes of a family group going into hiding, managing routine life in hiding and surviving a crisis.

Sessions during reading of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry:

- Warm-up exercises. Improvisation of personal experiences of injustice, followed by hotseating.
- Replay of recording of hotseating from previous session. Still pictures depicting adult-child relationships. Responses to picture of boy bullying smaller girl. Sociogramming of attitudes to the boy, from perspective of the girl, boy's friend and an older sister/brother.
- Masters and slaves role play. Slaves asked to write their feelings at selected points. Slaves set impossible task by masters, then auctioned. Hotseating.
- Hotseating of characters in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.
- Millie Murray's workshop. Hotseating of Millie as three generations of women in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Role play with Millie as Cassie and student (Peter) as Jeremy.
- 'O.K.' school/'snob' school role play 1. Brainstorming on respective qualities. Still pictures of separate schools. Hotseating 'snob' students. Improvising scene at bus-stop with new 'snob' school student on own meeting group of 'O.K.' students.

Sessions during reading of Waiting for the Rain:

- 'O.K.' school/'snob' school role-play 2. Still pictures of students from two schools meeting. 'Thought-tracking' i.e. students asked to say thoughts in role. Developing personal profiles of 'O.K.' and 'snob' students ten years later. Role-play of TV studio discussion on equality in education, with students in role ten years on, looking back at school experiences. Student in role as compere.

- 'O.K.' school/'snob' school role-play 3. TV discussion replayed with teacher in role as compere. In pairs students discuss feelings about other school.
- 'Motherland' drama 1. Students in role as inhabitants of a Caribbean island with teacher as narrator and in role as British Government official recruiting for labour. Use of picture exhibition and of testimonies to provide background information.
- 'Motherland' drama 2: Arrival in the 'mother' country. Session devised and led by Elly Williams (English/drama teacher at St Benedict's). 'Moulding' to show island family struck by unemployment. Teacher in role as British Embassy official offering work in England. Arrival at Waterloo station (moulding, using photographs). Teacher in role as fellow migrant then narrating about search for accomodation. Teacher in role as racist landlord. Changes made when session carried out with second group: Students first in role as English emigrants to Australia (to bring home sense of moving into unknown). Moulding themselves into people arriving at Waterloo station from Caribbean (looking at photographs). Teacher narrating difficulties over finding accomodation. Half the students in role as local inhabitants intent on harrassing newcomers. Still picture. Roles reversed. Reading of current testimony of racist harrassment, written in first person by girl living trapped indoors because of racist attacks.

Moving home

Have your parents or grandparents moved to England from another country? If not, have they perhaps moved to Bournemouth from somewhere else in England? Please say which members of the family have moved and from where they came.

If members of your family have moved, find out as much as possible about the sort of reasons which led to the move. Ask about both 'Push' and 'Pull' factors. For instance, what particular conditions might have 'pushed' them to leave their home place? Secondly, if they came from abroad what 'pulled' them to England - or, if they've moved within England, what 'pulled' them to the Bournemouth area? What were their hopes and expectations?

PUSH FACTORS:

PULL FACTORS:

Comings and Goings - Facts and Myths

1. Over the last 200 years, about 10 million people have come from other countries to live in Britain. About how many people have left Britain to go to other countries in that time?

2 million? 10 million? 20 million?

2. When do you think black people first started to come and live in Britain?

3. Think about the people who have come to live in this country since the end of the second world war. What countries did they mainly come from? If members of your family have migrated to Britain in that period, circle the country or countries from which they came.

4. Out of every 100 people who have come here, how many do you think were black?

5. Is the population of Britain getting bigger or smaller?

6. Is immigration making Britain overcrowded?

7. Out of every 100 people living in Britain today, how many do you think are black?

1 5 10 15 20 25 30 35

40 45 50

1st

2nd

APPENDIX 12.1

OUTLINE OF 'MEDIA WEEK': 3-7 JULY 1989

MONDAY:

1. Teacher's introduction by Alan Parsons on week and introduction of Sola Oyeleye. Sola introduces camera person and Gillian Klein. Clapping name game.
2. Brief discussion on role of a director.
3. Brief explanation of a 'treatment' for TV programme. (Theme: What young people in an area like ours need to be asking themselves about racism.)

Discussing responses to Getting to Grips with Racism.

Brief discussion of being like a Theatre in Education company for the week and making their own treatments.

4. Gillian Klein talking about her work, focusing on awareness amongst teachers and on books. Introduces letter from mother to headteacher about racist abuse of child in infant school (Appendix 12.2) - read by Sola.
5. 5 minute summary by BN of year's course.
6. Hotseating of Alan Parsons' on the year's work by Gillian and class.
7. Grouping game prior to groups looking at books/making notes; some interviewing Gillian.
8. Brief plenary.

TUESDAY:

1. Introduction of visitors from British Council of Churches - Sadie Kenway and Rev Kennedy Bedford. Warm up - physical exercises.
2. Vocal exercises -responsibility to keep rhythm going.
3. Introduction of 'deportation'. "How many parents born in Britain... how many in England?" Discussion of identity.
One volunteer in each group as potential deportee.
4. Shared reading of chronology of events in Zeynup's Story (Hasbudak and Simons, undated).
5. Groups creating still photos to represent experience of deportation.
6. Groups prepare questions to ask visitors.
7. Mock TV studio interview.

WEDNESDAY:

1. Introduction of Chris Gaine and Saleem Gillings.
Warm-ups - sentence name game and clapping/movement name game.
2. Creating banners in groups for campaign to save friend from deportation. Potential deportees each interviewed individually by Chris as immigration official while other deportees discuss their position with Saleem as Community Relations adviser.
Showing banners and still pictures coming to life.
Potential deportees share feelings about being interviewed.
3. Letter about racist abuse of young child re-read by student, followed by Forum Theatre improvisations. (mother and headteacher; the three children; Donna and her parents)
4. Video excerpt from Facing South showing Chris Gaine talking about survey of attitudes to 'race' among white children in south of England.
5. Mock TV studio interview with Chris and Saleem.

THURSDAY:

1. Introduction of Millie Murray. Clapping name game. Passing on rhythms.
2. Guessing jobs from photos of people. Discussion on expectations and stereotyping.
3. Groups writing list of words involving 'black'.
Looking up dictionary definitions for 'black' and 'white'.
Discussing prejudice in families.
4. Groups preparing items to be videoed, all opting for improvisations of scenes revealing racism.
Showing scenes plus discussion.
5. Poems - 'Back in the Playground Blues' (Appendix 12.3);
'First they came for the Jews' (Appendix 6.6).
6. Taking improvisations further.
7. Sola reading 'We have come too far to turn back now' (Appendix 12.4).

FRIDAY:

1. Introduction of Peter Evans from BBC. Sentence game.
2. Brief focus on whether any ideas have changed over the year.
3. Watching video of Thursday's improvisations.
4. Peter discussing importance of identifying the message you want to put across in making a film.
5. Brainstorming issues to do with racism (same process as when Peter was making Getting to Grips with Racism).
6. Peter showing students how to make a treatment. Discussion on name-calling.
7. Groups asked to fill out own treatment sheets - on racist attitudes out of school and at home; racist attacks and bullying; racist teachers; name-calling; racist jokes.
8. Brief plenary.

APPENDIX 12.2

COPY OF A LETTER FROM A PARENT TO THE HEAD-TEACHER OF AN INFANT SCHOOL
(Names have either been deleted or changed. The rest of the letter is
copied exactly from the original)

Dear

Sheena has come home on a few occasions saying that she has been called Blacky. I sat down and tried to explain to her that because Daddy was black and Mummy was white and that we loved each other, we decided to have Sheena and Sophie, and that Black and White made brown, that's why they were brown and they was made with love. She seemed quite happy with this explanation and nothing else was said.

A short time passed and one afternoon she came home from school and said that a child called Donna had been hitting her in the playground, and calling her Blacky once again. I tried to pass it off by telling her to take no notice and to tell the teacher if she was hit again and not to hit back.

One afternoon again I picked her up from school and she had a red mark on her face. I asked her what she had done. She told me she had been sat on the toilet and Donna had come in, slapped her across the face and told her that Blackys couldn't use the toilets. I just didn't know what to say to her and tried once again to pass it off as I didn't want her to think I was making a big fuss, even though to be honest I was furious.

She sat at home one evening and started crying for no apparent reason. When I asked her what was wrong, she replied "I don't want to be brown mummy, I want to be white". "But you're beautiful" I replied. "I wish I was brown like you". "But Donna says I look as if I have been rolled in dog muck".

Another evening she told me she didn't want to go to school anymore. When asked why she said that Donna and another girl called Angela had said she was a chicken because she wouldn't join their gang to beat, as she put it, the Pakis up. I told Sheena off and told her that they were Indian, Asian people and never to call them Pakis or anything else but their real names. She said if she didn't join their gang they were going to beat her up. By this time I was so upset myself that I told Sheena that if they hit her to hit them back and to tell them I would see their mums.

Last week Sheena came out with a comment that Miss H---- did not like her anymore. Don't be so silly I said, she does like you. She said Miss H---- is telling her off because she keeps hitting the other children.

Sheena seems to be getting on very well at school and I've been so pleased with what she has learnt since she has been with Miss H----. I would hate to think that she is hitting other children for nothing, she has always been such a loving child and I know that things don't always run as smoothly as I or perhaps yourself would like them to. But last night something happened that made me feel I ought to write this letter.

I told Sheena and Sophie to go and brush their teeth and I would be up soon to give them a wash before they went to bed. When I went into the bathroom Sheena stood stooped on the toilet. "Get Down" I said. "Just what do you think you are doing?" Sheena replied, "They told me at school that Blackys aren't allowed to sit on the toilet. They have to stand". I burst out crying, I just don't know what else to do, so I thought it best I write. I would love to come into school and talk to you if you could fit me in, as I can appreciate, you must have a busy schedule.

Yours sincerely

This infant school, where there were mainly white children, was generally regarded as a good, happy establishment. This letter provided quite a shock to its staff.

Back In The Playground Blues

Dreamed I was in a school playground I was about
four feet high
Yes dreamed I was back in the playground and
standing about four feet high
The playground was three miles long and the playground
was five miles wide.

It was broken black tarmac with a high wire fence all
around
Broken black dusty tarmac with a high fence running
all around
And it had a special name to it, they called it
The Killing Ground

Got a mother and a father they're a thousand miles away
The Rulers of the Killing Ground are coming out to play
Everyone thinking: who they going to play with today

You get it for being Jewish
Get it for being black
Get it for being chicken
Get it for fighting back
You get it for being big and fat
Get it for being small
Oh those who get it get it and get it
For any damn thing at all

Sometimes they take a beetle tear off its six legs one by one
Beetle on its black back rocking in the lunchtime sun
But a beetle can't beg for mercy, a beetle's not half the fun

Heard a deep voice talking, it had that iceberg sound
'It prepares them for a life' — but I have never found
Any place in my life that's worse than The Killing Ground

Adrian Mitchell

APPENDIX 12.4 'WE HAVE COME TOO FAR TO TURN BACK NOW'
BY OLUSOLA OYELEYE

WE HAVE COME TOO FAR TO TURN BACK NOW

We have come too far to turn back now

That dusty road from slavery has been well trod

The chains and rags and tales well told all gone

We will never forget that road

But we shall never travel along it again

We have come too far

We have come too far to stand arms folded in Apathy

Too much blood has been shed in the name of Liberty

For us not to struggle for Humanity

We must educate, debate, demonstrate, retaliate?

Until, just until...

And I will never allow myself to be intimidated

Because I want to be, to feel, to live this precious life

So I will never give up

I have come too far

You have come too far

Together we have come too far to turn back now.

APPENDIX 13.1

EVALUATION QUESTIONS USED BY CHRIS GAINES REQUIRING A WRITTEN RESPONSE

(These questions were interspersed with Chris talking to the students and gaining verbal responses.)

1. Describe the year. What have you been doing with Mrs Naidoo this year? What's it been about?
2. If there was something different from last year, can you write about it? Or perhaps from your other English lessons this year with Mr Parsons?
3. Would you like to keep hotseating?
4. What did you think about the various visitors?
Have you anything to say about the interviews with authors on tapes or videos?
5. How did you like or not like having more 'talk' in English? Why?
6. If you had a choice, what kinds of books would you like to read in English in the future - what topics, authors, countries?
7. Write down the good and bad bits about drama. What would you like next year's third year to do? If you can't remember anything, that would be interesting to hear too.
8. Write down the good bits and bad bits of 'Media Week'. What did you learn? You might have learnt nothing. If you've got no response, please say so.
9. What about Sola, if you haven't mentioned her already?

10. (Following John's verbal comment about the week being "one-sided") Do you feel that the week was one-sided? What would you have liked to have had there last week, but wasn't?
11. You watched a series of TV programmes about racism. If you have anything to say about those, scribble it down.
12. Remember you won't see Mrs Naidoo again, have you any comments on her?

YOUR READING JOURNAL

1. Can you find two or three pieces of writing in your journal which show you felt strongly about something you were reading or experiencing? Write down the page numbers and what you were writing about. Quote your most significant sentences.
3. Looking back at responses in your journal, have there been any books, poems and related activities which you think it would be good for other young people your age to experience? If so, what are they? Please also write why you would recommend them.

2. Can you find two or three pieces of writing which show that you were being challenged to think new thoughts or to see something in a new way? It should be where you feel you learnt something important. Again please quote page numbers, what you were writing about and your most significant sentences.
4. Looking back at your journal, have there been experiences from which you feel you have gained nothing of value? If so, can you write about these and say why they were disappointing. (It's not sufficient to describe them simply as boring or 'stupid'.)

APPENDIX 13.3 EVALUATION SHEET FOR FOCUSED RESPONSE WORK

RESPONSE SHEETS

BUDDY.

1. "It didn't do..."
2. "In the next shop..."
3. "She didn't hate him..."
4. "Buddy stepped out..."
5. Expectations of Charmian
6. 'I Wish' - 1st response
7. 'I Wish' - 2nd response

FRIEDRICH

8. 'Riot Area'
9. 1938 Sunday Express article
10. Character sheet
11. 'Grandfather'
12. 'The Way to School'
13. 'The Rabbi'
14. Time for Judgement

ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY

15. Character sheet - 1st/2nd response
16. 'The Bus'
17. 'The Burning' script
18. Racist abuse/ Grandma Cassie
19. Millie Murray's writing workshop
20. Jeremy/ Cassie thought-tracking

WAITING FOR THE RAIN

21. Classification
22. Chs.4/5 - Joseph/ Tengo thought-tracking
23. History of South Africa
24. Ch.14 - Advice to Tengo
25. 'Girls Apart' - video notes
26. Sheila Gordon interview - notes

'BRINGING IT HOME'

27. Graffiti/ Racism in the community - video notes
28. Moving Home
29. Comings and goings/ Racism in media/ immigration - video notes
30. 'Dreaming Black Boy'
31. Racism in children's books/school curriculum - video notes

Look carefully through the response sheets and papers in your folder.

UNDERLINE 5 of the above items you think the most interesting.

PUT A CROSS next to the 5 items which you think the least interesting.

On the other side of this page please explain in some detail your responses to each of the ten items you have selected. It is not sufficient simply to say you found something 'good' or 'boring'! If your views have changed about a piece of work since when you actually did it, please say so. (There could be something which seemed pointless at the time, but which you now see in a different light.)

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